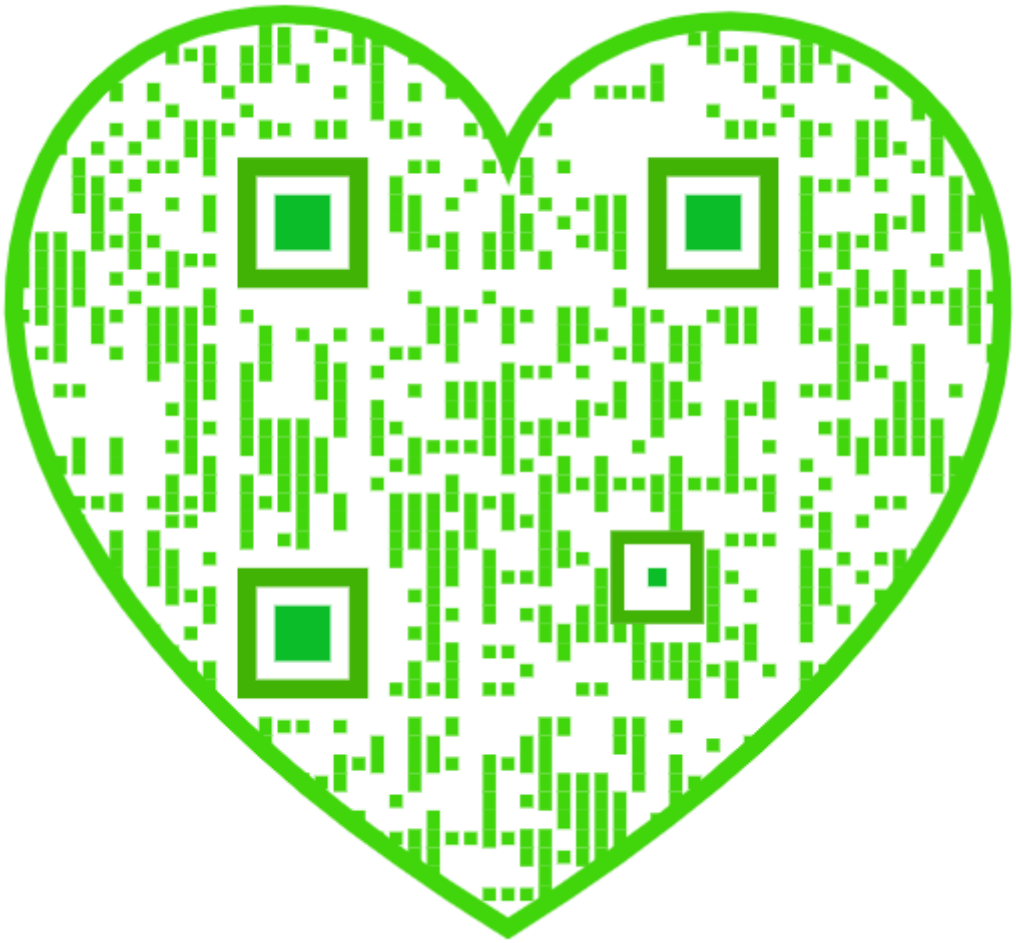

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PREFACE.

THE subjects considered in this volume have been so thoroughly sifted by professed antiquaries, that when they were submitted to the present writer, he at once perceived the impossibility of illustrating them by any new facts, while he felt the difficulty of compressing within the narrow limits assigned to him the vast quantity of materials that had been accumulated by his predecessors. Compilation and selection were the principal tasks left to him;—by these means he has endeavoured to condense into one little volume the information that he found dispersed in many; and to present in as popular and pleasing a form as possible, what has been too often encumbered, in more erudite disquisitions, with learned lore and antiquarian pedantry. It is hoped that in thus pruning away the useless leaves, in order to render the fruit more evident and attractive, little has been sacrificed which, for general purposes, it would have been desirable to retain. In works of this nature, which profess to be little more than summaries and abridgments, it is difficult to hit the happy medium between meager analysis and the fulness of original inquiry. Some readers, in their anxiety for knowledge, will require facts rather than comments; others, who are in search of amusement rather than of information, will prefer deductions and illustrations to minute-

ness and detail. To satisfy each of these classes is scarcely practicable; but it has been endeavoured to conciliate both, as far as possible, by varying the treatment of the different subjects, in order to adapt them, at least in some degree, to this diversity of tastes.

Instead of attempting to appropriate to himself the information of others, by translating it into his own phraseology, the present writer has frequently adopted the identical language of the original, freely using the privilege of omission, or condensation, interspersing such observations of his own as suggested themselves in his progress, and invariably stating at the end of each chapter, where his obligations are not acknowledged by previous foot-notes, the authorities whence his materials have been derived.

Only a portion of the spacious field of inquiry comprehended in our titlepage could be brought within the limits of this little work; and for the same reason many of the notices must inevitably be slight and cursory, where the writer could have wished to render them more general and enlarged. From the inviting subject of the ancient tilts and tournaments he was compelled to abstain, because these pastimes, belonging to the province of Chivalry, have already been considered in the twentieth volume of this Library. How far the following selections have been made with judgment, and presented in an eligible form, must be left to the indulgence of the reader.

London, 1831.

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FESTIVALS, GAMES, AND AMUSEMENTS,

ANCIENT AND MODERN.

CHAPTER I.

"Yet in the vulgar this weak humour's bred,—
They'll sooner be with idle customs led,
Or fond opinions, such as they have store,
Than learn of reason or of virtue's lore."
Wythers.

When the adage tells us that a man is to be known by the company he keeps, it is only to affirm that his character is best developed in his amusements; for the society of familiar intercourse is a recreation founded upon congeniality of disposition. Our trades, professions, and serious pursuits are not always matter of choice; nay, they are often prosecuted from duty or necessity against our own inclinations; and afford, therefore, no certain test of individual predilection. It is in our diversions, where we follow the spontaneous impulse of the mind, that its genuine qualities are revealed. It is here seen, as it were, *en deshabille*, in which state its real beauties and deformities can be much more accurately determined than when it is tricked out in the appropriate garb of station and profession, or disguised in any of the manifold varieties of conventional observance. Every man is an actor, who, if he wishes to ensure the successful performance of his part upon the great theatre of the world, must practise a certain degree of illusion. To ascertain the truth we must get behind the scenes, into the privacy of the performer's amusements and relaxations—a process by which we shall often discover the verity of the dictum that no man is a hero to his *valet-de-chambre*; and that exterior gravity, sanctimonious pretension, and even the superficial qualities of wisdom may be assumed and worn by

triflers, libertines, and simpletons. A man may impose upon his spectators in the public business of life, so much of which is scenic and fictitious; but he cannot deceive either himself or others in his private pursuits. There is no hypocrisy in our pleasures: in these nature will always predominate; and the relaxation in which we indulge will be generally found proportionate to the previous constraint that has warped us from our proper bias; just as the recoil of the unstrung bow will be commensurate with the tension from which it is released.

No censure is implied in this contrast, however extreme, so long as the diversions to which we betake ourselves are unobjectionable in their nature; for the greatest minds are known to have stooped to simplicity, and even to childishness in their sports; as the lark, although it flies higher than any other bird, sinks to the lowly ground to repose itself and to build its nest. None but a pompous blockhead or solemn prig will pretend that he never relaxes, never indulges in pastime, never wastes his breath in idle waggery and merriment. Such gravity is of the very essence of imposture, where it does not spring, as is frequently the case, from a morbid austerity or morose ignorance. "Let us be wise now, for I see a fool coming," said Plato, when he was once joking with his disciples, and saw a churl of this stamp approaching them. Occasional playfulness, indeed, seems to be natural to all strong minds. "The most grave and studious," says Plutarch, "use feasts, and jests, and toys, as we do sauce to our meat." Agesilaus, as everybody knows, amused himself and his children by riding on a stick; the great Scipio diverted himself with picking up shells on the seashore; Socrates used to dance and sing by way of relaxation; the facetious Lucian and the grave Scaliger have both confessed the pleasure they found in singing, dancing, and music. Mæcenas, with his friends Virgil and Horace, delighted in sports and games. Shakspeare played on the bass-viol, which he accompanied with his voice; and the witty Swift amused himself with hunting and chasing his friends, the two Sheridans, through all the rooms of the deanery.

Man is the only animal that laughs, a faculty that would hardly have been bestowed upon him unless it were intended to be called into exercise. The fantastical and unnatural

severity that disclaims all merriment and relaxation is but a different and infinitely less pleasing mode of self-love, seeking a sullen gratification by affecting to despise the gratifications of others. There are individuals, no doubt, in whom such solemn strictness may be unaffected: to minds that are intrinsically grovelling and low-bent a certain stiffness and rigidity may be a relief, for an erect tension is the natural relaxation of those who have been long stooping. Such starched rigorists recall the well-known story of the man in the pit of the Dublin theatre, who refused to sit down when all the others were seated, upon which a voice from the gallery cried out, "Ah! leave the poor creature alone; he's a tailor, and he's only resting himself."

It need excite little surprise that the laborious, the learned, and the dignified are often not less frivolous in their diversions than the shallowest loungers and coxcombs. The latter may be termed professional triflers, who thus waste their hours because they cannot otherwise employ them; the former are amateur idlers, who have been such good economists of their time that they can well afford to throw some away, and who only relax in order to invigorate their minds. Hurdis had formed no erroneous view of human pursuits when he exclaimed,

> We trifle all; and he who best deserves,
> Is but a trifler. What art thou whose eye
> Follows my pen; or what am I that write?—
> Both triflers.

The more trivial our recreations the more accurately will they often reveal the qualities of the mind, as the lightest feather we can toss up will best determine the direction of the wind. If this be true of an individual, it will be equally applicable to a nation, whose familiar and domestic character we may much better ascertain from their sports, pastimes, and amusements, than from those more prominent and important features to which historians have usually restricted themselves in their delineations. Laws, institutions, empires, pass away and are forgotten; but the diversions of a people, being commonly interwoven with some immutable element of the general feeling, or perpetuated by circumstances of climate and locality, will frequently survive when every other national peculiarity has worn itself out and

fallen into oblivion. As the minds of children, modified by the forms of society, are pretty much the same in all countries and at all epochs, there will be found little variation in their ordinary pastimes—a remark equally applicable to those nations which, from their non-advancement in civilization, may be said to have still retained their childhood. Many of our school-games are known to have existed from the earliest antiquity; the diversions of the wild Arabs have remained immutable for many ages. Nor do the common people of any country easily abandon their most frivolous amusements, although in every other respect their character may have undergone a total change. Nothing can be more dissimilar than an ancient and a modern Roman; yet we see the porters and the market-people of the Eternal City seated on the ruins of her forgotten grandeur, and playing at the game of the morra,* exactly as they are recorded to have done in the days of the republic and of the emperors. Even in royal life we are enabled by occasional glimpses of history to trace an identity of amusement at very different periods. From the circumstance of his using his prisoner, the Roman emperor Valerian, as his footstool when he mounted his horse, we know that Sapor, the monarch of Persia, used to hunt with ounces or leopards trained to act as hounds, and carried out to the field in wooden cages; a mode of sporting which, after the lapse of fifteen centuries, continues to be a favourite pastime with the native princes of India, who run down the antelope with the hunting leopard or cheeta.

Although toil and sorrow, the penalties of the fall, seem to have been entailed upon the bulk of mankind as their sole and melancholy inheritance, we read not of any canon that prohibits a temporary alleviation of their doom by means of sports, pastimes, and amusements. These indeed may be said to form a portion of our very nature; the constitution both of the human mind and body unfitting them for incessant occupation, and imperatively dictating occasional diversion as an indispensable condition of their healthy exercise. To trace the variation in the nature of these respites from anxiety and drudgery, had we sufficient materials for closely following up the inquiry, would be to record

* Guessing at the number of fingers suddenly held up.

the progress of the human mind, deriving our data from the pleasant fields of public sport and private recreation, instead of exploring those revolting fields of battle, and not less repugnant scenes of crime, violence, and misery, which offer such abundant resources to the historian. Happiness and amusement, however, are deemed unworthy of notice by the annalist, who seems to imagine that the reader, while he finds delight in the carnage, revolution, and angry passions that have harassed his fellow-creatures, can have little pleasure in conveying the few and fleeting enjoyments that may have soothed their turbulent career.

In the recorded manners of different nations, as they have been handed down to us by ancient writers, we catch, however, occasional though unconnected glimpses of their public and private recreations. Of these we shall freely avail ourselves as opportunity may occur; but without reference to such specific sources of information, the general principles of our nature will enable us to form a rough outline of the changes that have taken place in the amusements of mankind at large, according to the influences of time and civilization. At the outset of the world, ere the agricultural state had commenced, and when the few inhabitants of the earth were too much occupied in providing for their subsistence to have made even the rudest attempts at civilization, we can hardly imagine them to have indulged in any other diversion than field-sports; if it be not a misnomer to apply that term to the painful and precarious toil of naked savages, urged to the chase by the cravings of hunger, or compelled to struggle with wild beasts for the doubtful possession of their lairs and caverns. Most painful it is to fix our contemplations upon a period when this majestical sun-lighted globe, so beautiful and magnificent in itself, and filling so glorious a part in the sublime pageant of the God-directed universe, was doomed, for some inscrutable object of the Divine wisdom, to purposes apparently so unworthy of the splendid stage upon which they were performed: when man, whose reasoning faculties were yet undeveloped, was little superior to the beasts he chased: when the tearing of limbs, the shedding of blood, and mutual destruction were the sole and incessant occupation of every animated being, until death, the universal hunter, who, though he may sometimes prolong the chase, never

eventually spares his prey, ran down and annihilated every thing that moved upon the face of the earth. By comparing the world as it then existed with the happiness and widely-diffused civilization with which it is now blessed, and above all, by contrasting the hourly-improving intellectual eminence of the living generation with the ignorant barbarism of the early ages, we may form some conception, though probably but a dim one, of the glorious destiny which a beneficent Providence has reserved for mankind, even in our present sphere.

When mankind had partially advanced to the agricultural state, we find that their most distinguished heroes and demigods were sportsmen and hunters, whose exploits, although subsequently dressed up in fable by the poets, had doubtless, in most instances, a basis of fact. Every nation has its Nimrod; nor need we doubt that there must have been some foundation for the marvellous adventures recorded of Orion, Apollo, Hercules, and other monster-destroyers, if we recollect that the fossil remains of those gigantic quadrupeds, the mammoth and the megalonix, establish the fact that the earth was formerly infested with terrible animals whose races have now become extinct, and whose existence was once deemed as fabulous as we now deem the legendary labours of Hercules. This potent sportsman, and others of the same stamp, seem to have been the knights-errant of the early ages, who wandered about the world tilting at dragons, minotaurs, and similar culprits, and to whom the honour of deification was awarded by the grateful people delivered from such formidable ravagers. Poetry soon invested their achievements with fictitious embellishments; a circumstance almost necessary to the success of any narrative, when the world was in its childhood, and readers possessing the taste of children, who always find simple truth insipid, required to be stimulated by the marvellous and the supernatural. Of such puerilities we find an abundant supply in the nonage of our own literature. Numerous troops of dragons survived the heroic ages, seeking every opportunity of attacking holy hermits and pious wanderers, if we are to believe the legends of the saints, whose commentators indignantly reject any spiritual interpretation of these desperate conflicts, and insist that every devout champion thus assailed maintained a not less perilous and

triumphant battle than did the doughty Saint George. The celebrated Moore, of Moore Hall, appears to have been the last of our British sportsmen who was so fortunate as to encounter a *bona-fide* dragon. In the dun cow hunted down and killed by Guy Earl of Warwick we have an imitation, although but a sorry one, of Theseus and his minotaur; while the Laidly Worm, of ballad renown, presents us a serpent, inferior doubtless to the Pythian monster slain by the darts of Apollo, although sufficiently formidable to have conferred no mean celebrity on its destroyer.

A certain degree of rudeness, and not unfrequently of coarseness and cruelty, characterizes all the amusements of remote antiquity, which, being unrefined by any intellectual mixture, were chiefly calculated to display and invigorate the bodily qualities of the parties who engaged in them. Many of their pastimes were but imitations of the different military exercises; and though vaulting, racing, wrestling, throwing the bar or the quoit, and cudgel-playing might not be directly referable to this object, they conduced to it collaterally by strengthening the body, inuring it to fatigue, and preparing it for war, which in such barbarous times was considered the paramount business of life. Strength and courage, the sole constituents of a hero, were then exercised without mercy in the field of battle, and imparted a touch of ferocity even to those nominally amicable contests that were celebrated on days of festival. Hunting and field-sports, moreover, which at this early epoch were so widely pursued, and which in all ages retain the same character of cruelty, must have stamped upon the general mind a savageness that could scarcely fail to betray itself in the hours of pastime and relaxation. What indeed can be expected from the diversions of a rude untutored people, but that they should evince manifest traits of violence and barbarism, even where they do not degenerate into actual brutality?

Such is the character of the earliest games recorded in history, whether fabulous or authentic. In the sports of the Argonauts, after their return, Cycnus, the son of Mars, killed Diodotus, and was himself slain by Hercules. The games described in the twenty-fourth book of the Iliad, the eighth of the Odyssey, and by Virgil in the fifth book of the Æneid, are mere struggles of bodily strength and skill,

frequently marked by dangerous violence, and always unrelieved by any intellectual competition. The game of the cestus, or loaded gauntlet, a murderous weapon, was in high favour with the heroes and demigods. Amycus, king of the Bebrycians, compelled all strangers who touched upon his coast to try their skill in managing this rude instrument, which proved fatal to most of those who accepted his friendly challenge; but the royal athlete was at length defeated at his own favourite pastime, and slain by Pollux.

In a more advanced stage of civilization, however, after wealth and luxury had been introduced—when there were whole classes of unemployed men and women who had as yet no resource in literary pursuits, and who eagerly sought relief from the tedium of inoccupation—we may presume a variety of games and amusements to have been invented. These, as they were intended for people averse from any violent exercise or fatigue, would only call the powers of the body into a gentle exercise, calculated for the purposes of health; while others, wholly sedentary in their nature, would address themselves more or less to the faculties of the mind. This second stage, by making the intellect participate with the body and the senses in our amusements, not only gave an immediate exaltation to their character, but prepared the way for those subsequent meliorations which, under the influence of the diffusion of knowledge occasioned by the discovery of printing, have been gradually refining, elevating, and humanizing our diversions. It must be confessed that in England they still retain many traits of barbarism which have long since fallen into desuetude with our more polished neighbours of the continent; but at the same time it should be remembered that the Corinthian classes, who in the days of Queen Elizabeth flocked to bull, bear, badger, ape baitings, and other exhibitions equally cruel and ruffianly, would be now held utterly disgraced, at least in the estimation of real gentlemen, by participating in such low-lived sports. The charms of music, of the drama, of literature, of social meetings that combine "the feast of reason with the flow of soul;" all those pursuits, in short, wherein the pleasures of sense are made subservient to the gratifications of the mind—these are the amusements alone worthy of rational people, and these receive the especial patronage of the English gentry.

In the present hasty summary it is not our purpose to notice the gradations by which this striking improvement has been effected, nor shall we point out what yet remains to be accomplished, in order to perfectionate the manners of the age with reference to its amusements. Hints, however, upon both these points may incidentally be given in the course of the following little work, to which we shall now proceed, only premising that although we shall briefly discuss some of the sports and diversions of ancient times and foreign nations, we shall not treat the subject as if we were writing for professed antiquaries, but rather in a popular and anecdotical manner; and that it will be the chief object of our inquiries to record and elucidate the pastimes which at various periods have been prevalent in our own country.

CHAPTER II.

Festivals, Games, and Amusements of the Ancient Jews.

"There, take thy pastime and do what thou wilt, but sin not by proud speech."—*Eccl.* xxxii. 12.

"Now, therefore, see that thou make a copy of these things."
1 *Macc.* xi. 37.

As the Jews are the earliest nation of whom we have any authentic records, they are entitled to our first attention in the following inquiries. From their warlike character, the theocratical form of their government, their stern fanaticism, and that stubborn intolerance of all foreign customs which led them to repudiate with loathing the sports and pastimes of the gentiles, it has been concluded by many that they were averse from public shows, or social amusement of any description. This is but the repetition of an old charge adduced against them by their Roman conquerors; but instead of inferring such an anomaly in the history of the human race as that a whole people should reject the occasional recreations which our common nature imperatively requires, it would have been more judicious to sur-

mise that although they differed in these respects, as in every thing else, from the surrounding nations, they must have had some diversions peculiar to themselves. In inquiring into their nature it will be seen that they were of a loftier character and even of more frequent occurrence than those of the Pagans, to which they scarcely bore more resemblance than to the pastimes of the existing generation.

Game-laws, that remnant of a barbarous age which forms the grossest outrage upon modern civilization, were unknown to the Israelites: whatever they found in their fields they might without scruple consider as their property, and hunt, catch, or kill as they chose, with no other restriction upon this common and natural right than such as was imposed by the limitations of the seventh year. Whatever grew in that year on the fallow land was for the game,* which was then to be left unmolested. From the dense population, and the scarcity of cover in Palestine, it is probable, notwithstanding this measure for its preservation, that among a nation of farmers, all equally licensed for its destruction, it would soon become too scarce to afford amusement in its pursuit. Certain it is that field-sports, in the ordinary acceptation of that term, seem to have been little practised by the ancient Jews. Some of the common objects of the chase, such for instance as the hare, being pronounced unclean by the law, and placed among the prohibited meats, could not be eaten, although they might be destroyed as depredators. From the expression of Moses, that oxen, sheep, and goats throughout Palestine might be eaten *even as the hart and the roe*, we may conclude that these latter animals furnished the chief prey of the sportsman. The Jewish legislator, however, gives no ordinance for the regulation of the chase, nor do his writings afford any clew by which his intentions in this respect can be divined. Perhaps he considered the matter too trifling to deserve special regulation: perhaps he held it better adapted for local policy than for any general law, except that of the sabbatical year.

Anxiety to prevent the extirpation of the game, combined with that humanity towards animals which forms so prominent and honourable a feature of the Mosaic law,

* Exod. xxiii. 2; Lev. xxv. 7.

dictated, however, several minor directions not altogether irrelevant to this point. It is the command of Moses, that if a person find a bird's nest in the way, whether in a tree or on the ground, though he may take the eggs or the young, he shall not take the mother, but always allow her to escape. From analogy we might perhaps infer that no one durst kill the hind either when pregnant or when suckling the fawn. Both these rules are observed by modern sportsmen as necessary for the renewal of the game; but as there was no privileged class among the Jews interested in preserving it for their own amusement; as they were, on the contrary, mostly farmers who would be benefited by its extinction, we may safely conclude that if it did not altogether disappear, it soon became too scarce to allow the existence of such a character as a mere sportsman: an inference supported by the general silence of the Bible upon this subject.

A law so delicate in its humane injunctions, so averse even from an appearance of cruelty, that it forbade the Jews from seething the kid in its mother's milk,* would of course be understood even without any express injunction, as prohibitory of horse-racing, the bating of beasts, animal combats, and similar barbarous pastimes. Still more imperatively would it be held to interdict those savage sports where human beings destroyed one another for the gratification of a brutal populace. Gladiatorial games and the brutalizing scenes of the arena were abhorred by the Jews, not only as infractions of their peculiar law, but as being utterly repugnant to the common law of nature. The struggle of the twenty-four combatants, whom Abner and Joab caused to play before them until they were all unnaturally murdered, bears some resemblance, indeed, to a gladiatorial combat; but as it occurred in the presence of two hostile armies, it should rather perhaps be viewed as a challenge between an equal number of champions selected from the hostile ranks. From arts and literature the early Hebrews appear to have derived no amusement whatever. Owing to a mistaken interpretation of the decalogue, they held statuary and painting to be flagrant offences in the sight of the Lord, as having an idolatrous tendency. No theatre, no circus, no hippodrome, no gallery, nor odeum, was to be

* This law, though doubtless calculated to prevent cruelty, bore reference chiefly to a gross and idolatrous practice among the Canaanites.

found within the walls of Jerusalem or in the whole territory of Palestine; until in the latter days of the nation, when the corruption, degeneracy, and neglect of every sacred injunction that disgraced the reign of Herod led them to adopt many of the heathen practices, and prepared the way for the final downfall of the people.

In what then, it may be asked, consisted the sports and pastimes of the Jews, since they refused, with such an inflexible obstinacy, to adopt those of other nations, and do not appear to have possessed any public shows or amusements of their own? It will not be difficult to answer this question, if we recollect that as religion was the source of all their institutions, and the observance of its injunctions the chief public duty they had to perform, they must have derived from it their pleasures as well as their occupations. The sacred ceremonies which, exclusively of the pomp of sacrifice, the perfume of rich odours, and a stately display of gorgeously-attired processionists in the courts of their venerated temple, and in the presence of a whole assembled people, combined the attractions of male and female dancers with all the enchantments of the most exquisite musicians and singers, were not only incomparably more grand, imposing, and magnificent, as a mere spectacle, than any theatrical exhibition that the world could produce, but appealed to the heart while they delighted the eye, gratified the soul as well as the sense, awakened feelings of patriotism as well as of religion, and by uniting the splendours of earth to the glorious hopes of heaven, constituted a union of fascinations which no sensitive or pious Jew could have contemplated without an ecstasy of delight. Well might the people of the Lord, whose highest duties were thus enlivened and sweetened by a public festival, and whose pleasures were sanctified and exalted by religious associations, look down with contempt on the cruel sports and vulgar pastimes of the heathen. So long as the Hebrew people retained their attachment to their religion, they remained satisfied with the festivals and stately celebrations that it afforded; and not until all classes were desecrated by a general impiety, did they consent to adopt the games and amusements of their Roman conquerors. This innovation seems to have been first openly practised in the time of the Maccabees, when Jason, a Hellenised Jew, having

procured himself to be illegally made high-priest, "Forthwith brought his own nation to the Greekish faction, and brought up new customs against the law; for he built gladly a place of exercise under the tower itself, and brought the chief young men under his subjection, and made them wear a hat. Now such was the height of Greek fashions, and increase of heathenish manners, through the exceeding profaneness of Jason, that ungodly wretch and no high-priest, that the priests had no courage to serve any more at the altar; but despising the temple, and neglecting the sacrifices, hastened to be partakers of the unlawful allowance in the place of exercise, after the game of discus called them forth."* Herod subsequently completed what Jason had begun, building a hippodrome even within the walls of the Holy City, and another at Cæsarea.

It would be a wide error to suppose, with the ancient Pagans, that because the Jews had no other public diversions than those furnished by their sacred ceremonies, they must be necessarily a gloomy, saturnine, and unsocial people. A directly contrary inference would be justified by the character of their religion, which was essentially as festive and joyous as that of the pagans, and infinitely more so than would be deemed consistent with the notions of modern puritans and rigorists, or even with the interests of state policy.

At a time when we are abolishing our holydays, and many well-meaning but mistaken people are anxious to restrict, as much as possible, the few diversions and the scanty hours of relaxation allowed to the labouring classes, it may not be uninstructive to exhibit a statement of the whole number of Sabbaths and other holydays which Moses prescribed to the Israelites. In a year of twelve moons the following holydays were ordered to be kept:

1.	Twelve new moons	12 days
2.	The Feast of the Passover	7
3.	The Pentecost	7
4.	The great Day of Atonement	1
5.	The Feast of Tabernacles	8
	in all	35 days;

but of these thirty-five days five would fall, taking one year

* 2 Maccabees iv. 10–14.

with another, upon the weekly Sabbath, and must therefore be deducted from the total number; and besides, among the thirty-five holydays there were but eight festal Sabbaths on which they durst not work.

"According therefore to the Mosaic law, if we reckon fifty-two weekly Sabbaths, and thirty holydays, the Israelites kept eighty-two sacred days in the year; namely, fifty-nine on which there was an entire cessation from labour, and twenty-three wherein they might work if they chose, and on some of which indeed their greatest traffic occurred. Of fast-days there was only *one*, and that too, we should remark, in a southern climate, where fasting is easier and more common than with us."*

Besides these there were other festivals, not of Mosaic appointment; of which sort appears to have been the yearly festival, when the young women of Shiloh danced by the highway-side (Judg. xxi. 19). It is probable that other cities as well as Jerusalem had their particular holydays: and we might almost conclude that family festivals were not unusual, since Jonathan, to apologize for David's absence from the royal table, pretended that he had been obliged to attend a family sacrifice at Bethlehem. This indeed was not true; but the practice must have been common, or Jonathan would not have resorted to such a pretext. Among the feasts instituted in addition to those enjoined by Moses, we may notice the feast of Purim, or lots, appointed by Esther and Mordecai to commemorate the deliverance of the Jews from the massacre which Haman had by lot determined against them, and in the celebration of which that arch enemy of their race was treated with ridiculous indignities, not altogether dissimilar from those which we heap upon the effigy of Guy Fawkes. Of a more rational nature was the Festival of the Dedication, instituted by Judas Maccabeus, to commemorate the recovery of the Temple from the Syro-grecians, and its renewed dedication to the service of the true God. This feast, which was observed in other places as well as at Jerusalem, lasted eight days, which we must add, as well as those consumed in the wild festivities of the Purim, to the eighty-two holydays already enumerated, making altogether above a fourth part of the year

* See Michaelis, art. 201; a learned writer, to whose commentaries the author acknowledges his obligations in this brief sketch.

set aside for purposes of commingled religion and amusement.

Having stated the number of these celebrations, it may be necessary to say something of their nature, in order to show that they were not merely religious observances, but for the most part festivals and holydays, in the cheerful and joyous sense which we ourselves assign to those words, and as such strictly entitled to be ranked among the sports, pastimes, and amusements of the people. Of the three high festivals, when all the males of Israel were obliged to assemble at the sanctuary, two lasted seven days, for which sabbatical number the Jews had a particular reverence;—and the third was continued during eight days; but we must guard against the notion that during all this time labour or occupation were interdicted. Such a prohibition, especially to an uneducated people, would have been the severest of all punishments, for no burden is so insupportable to the mass of mankind as that of protracted and compulsory idleness. Only the first and last of these festival days were Sabbaths, on which there was to be no work: on the remaining five the people might labour, or employ themselves in whatever way they thought fit; and there is reason to believe that in this interval the great fairs of the whole nation were held, when the most business would of course be done, and during the continuance of which we may conclude there was no lack of the pastimes and diversions that characterize similar merry-meetings in our own times.

During the eight days of the Feast of Tabernacles, which was the festival of gratitude for the fruits and vintage, the Israelites dwelt in booths formed of green branches interwoven together, an embowered mode of encamping, which in conjunction with the festive occasion, the beauty of the October weather, and the pleasant excitement of social intercourse upon so extensive a scale, must have naturally predisposed them to indulge in every species of joyful recreation and amusement. They who had been specially ordered to "serve the Lord with gladness, and come into his presence with a song," thought they could not better solemnize the intermediate days of the high festivals than by offerings, feasts, and dances, accompanied by hymns, in which the bounty of the Deity was celebrated: thus moral-

izing and sanctifying their pleasures by uniting them with religion. Their festivals, in short, were days of pleasure, on which they gave or received entertainments, and in the joys of which the poor and the slaves were entitled to participate. Feast-offerings were not to be frugal every-day meals, but real merry-meetings, intended to supply good cheer to widows, orphans, strangers, and paupers, as well as to the offerer and his friends; and wine, so far from being forbidden by Moses, is expressly appointed for an accompaniment both to blood and to meal-offerings, as if nothing might be wanting that could exhilarate and delight the people on these joyous occasions. Moses commonly terms such banquets, *rejoicing before Jehovah*, and in order to make the intention of the festal-offerings more fully understood, he sometimes adds that they should *rejoice before Jehovah in the intervals of their labours*, that is, interrupt their ordinary occupations by these joyous assemblages, and lighten them by the good cheer of the feasts. It is recorded, to the especial praise and glory of Solomon, that the people of Judah and Israel were numerous as the sand of the sea —"Eating and drinking and making merry."* Nor are the Scriptures elsewhere sparing in exhortations to "make merry before the Lord."

Dancing, during which songs of praise were sung, formed a very ancient part of the festal solemnities of the Hebrews. After the passage of the Red Sea the damsels of Israel, with Miriam at their head playing on the tabret, sang and danced in celebration of that miraculous event. David himself danced at the induction of the ark into the tabernacle: we learn from the 68th Psalm, that singers, minstrels, and damsels playing on timbrels accompanied the sacred processions, and these probably danced also. The yearly festival held not far from Shiloh, at which the damsels were seized by the Benjamites, consisted of the same amusement. From these authorities, and from the still more explicit terms of Psalm cxlix. 3, and cl. 4, we may reasonably maintain that dancing was expressly commanded by the Lord, and it becomes, therefore, the more difficult to understand how certain gloomy censors and theologians can condemn as sinful a practice which was

* 1 Kings iv. 20.

distinctly enjoined under the Old Testament, and is nowhere forbidden by the New. If it were thus prevalent in the public ceremonies of the Hebrews, we cannot doubt that the same recreation, varied by music and singing, constituted one of the principal attractions in their private entertainments, and in the amusements of the domestic circle.

Although the injunction for attending the Israelitish festivals was only imperative upon the males, the fathers, we may presume, gratified their daughters by taking them up to the Holy City upon these occasions, thus affording to the men an opportunity of seeing and dancing with all the young beauties of the nation. By these means marriages were promoted between individuals of the different tribes, family friendships were formed, and a general brotherhood and bond of social love was established among the twelve petty states which constituted the Jewish people. Religion, commerce, and amusement were thus combined in these great annual conventions, which so far resembled in their first elements the Olympic games of the Greeks, and may be equally classed as national sports, although they were immeasurably more august and rational, both as respects their divine origin and the mode of their celebration.

Exclusively of the minor festivals, which were all observed with a similar hilarity, civil feasts and entertainments were commonly kept at the weaning of children, at the making of covenants, at marriages, at the shearing of sheep, and on other amicable occasions. At these merry-meetings they seem to have appointed a symposiarch, whose duty it was to promote the general hilarity.—"If thou be made the master of the feast," says the author of Ecclesiasticus,* "take diligent care for them—and when thou hast done all thy office, take thy place that thou mayst be merry with them, and receive a crown for thy well ordering of the feast.—Pour not out words where there is a musician; and show not forth wisdom out of time. A concert of music in a banquet of wine is as a signet of carbuncle set in gold. As a signet of an emerald set in a work of gold, so is the melody of music with pleasant wine. There, take thy pastime and do what thou wilt, but sin not by proud speech." The Hebrews, in fact, so far from being an aus-

* xxxii. 1, 2, 5, 6, 12.

tere or unjoyous people, seem to have eagerly seized every opportunity that afforded them a reasonable excuse for festive hospitality. That this natural cheerfulness sometimes pushed them to excess, even in their religious festivals, is sufficiently attested by the mode in which they celebrated the feast of Purim, which it must, however, be recollected was not of Mosaic institution. After several strange and not very decorous indignities heaped upon the effigy of Haman, they were accustomed to spend the rest of the day in feasting, sports, and dissolute mirth, each sex dressing themselves in the clothes of the other, and practising a variety of mad frolics, while the rabbins, pretending that Esther obtained the deliverance of her countrymen by intoxicating Ahasuerus, allowed the people to stupify themselves with drink. Excesses such as these, especially in connexion with religious observances, it is not intended to vindicate; they are merely adduced as tending to exculpate the Jews from the charge of ascetical severity to which they have been sometimes subjected.

Such importance seems to have been attached by Moses to the universal unrestricted enjoyment of these festivals, and of the periodical respite from labour prescribed by the Sabbath, that he has carefully extended his benevolent regulations in this respect to the lowest classes of human beings, and even to the labouring animals and beasts of burthen. Scripture expressly tells us that one design of the Sabbath was to give a day of rest to slaves;—and the Israelites, in order to make them the more compassionate in this respect, are reminded of their own servitude in Egypt, when they longed in vain for days of repose.* At all the high festivals and great entertainments they were ordered not to eat the tithes, firstlings, or offerings *within their gates*, but to make them a public banquet, to which the male and female slaves should be invited, as well as the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow.† Such occasions were, therefore, a sort of saturnalia for the lower orders; "and we cannot but extol the clemency and humanity of that law which procured them, twice or thrice a year, a few days' enjoyment of those luxuries which they would doubtless relish the more the poorer their ordinary food might be."‡

* Deut. v. 14, 15. † Deut. xii. 17, 18, and xvi. 11. ‡ Michaelis, art. 128

It has been thought by some that the statute which prohibits muzzling the ox while threshing the corn, was meant to be extended to servants, who were not to be tantalized with the preparation of food which they were not allowed to taste.

When Job wishes to describe the avarice and hardheartedness of the wicked, he says, "They take away the sheaf from the hungry, which make oil within their walls, and tread their wine-presses and suffer thirst:"* and in proof that this construction of the Mosaic ordinance is supported by the practices of the ancient Jews, Michaelis (art. 130) quotes the following rabbinical doctrine:—"The workman may lawfully eat of what he works among: in the vintage he may eat of grapes; when gathering figs he may partake of them; and in harvest he may eat of the ears of corn. Of gourds and dates he may eat the value of a denarius." Moses has not even forgotten the poor wanderers who were exposed to casual hunger, in which case he seems to have imagined that the natural right of food superseded all laws of property, and has allowed the eating of fruits and grapes in other peoples' gardens and vineyards without restraint.

Not content with these ordinances, so obviously meant to secure to all animated beings stated periods of rest, and an equal enjoyment of the produce of the earth and the blessings of existence, Moses extended his benevolent regulations even to inanimate nature, by ordering that in every seventh year the land itself should remain untilled, that it might enjoy the Sabbath of the Lord. During this fallow year the corn-fields were neither sown nor reaped; the vines were unpruned, and there were no grapes gathered: the whole of Palestine continued a perfect common, and every thing reverted, as it were, to a state of nature. This repose of the soil was to be consecrated to God, who declared that all his creatures, both of the human and inferior species, might then assert an equal right to the spontaneous produce of the earth. Whatever grew, instead of being the property of any individual, belonged alike to all, to the poor, the bondman, the day-labourer, the stranger, the cattle that ranged the fields, and the very game, which no man

* Job xxiv. 10, 11.

durst then scare from his grounds. During this continued festival debts were forborne or forgiven, and bond-servants, who had served a certain number of years, might demand their manumission. It has been conjectured that the chief object of this singular law was not only to teach the Hebrews that their land was the Lord's property, but to promote the accumulation of corn in stores, and thus guard against a famine, the importance of which precaution Moses must have known from the history of Joseph, and the practice of Egypt. The liberated bond-servants, whose masters were bound by the benevolent injunctions of Moses to present them, among other things, with one or two sheep, were enabled also, during this year of release, not only to procure a maintenance for themselves, but to find pasturage for their cattle, and to lay the foundation of a little flock. How a nation of husbandmen could find occupation without tillage or avoid the pernicious effects of a whole year's idleness, we have no means of judging. Their games and amusements, whatever was their nature, must have been called into active exercise.

But the greatest, most general, and most glorious festival ever recorded in history, or practised by any people, was the demi-centennial jubilee, at the commencement of which the glad sound of trumpets and of rams' horns proclaimed liberty throughout the whole land; whatever debt the Hebrews owed to one another was to be wholly remitted; hired as well as bond-servants were set free; and the inheritances that had been alienated reverted to their original proprietors. During this whole period, as in the sabbatical year, no servile work was to be performed, the land was to remain untilled, and its spontaneous produce belonged to the poor and needy.

By this law Moses probably intended to bring back the nation to its original state, to preserve equality among the people, and to prevent that tendency to accumulation which rapidly divides a community into a few rich and a numerous body of poor. But it soon fell into desuetude, and indeed it is not easy to conceive how it could long remain in operation; for as the men of property would naturally become the most influential in legislative enactments, they were pretty sure to abrogate a law which would confiscate their newly acquired estates every fifty years. This insti-

tution, therefore, as well as that of the sabbatical year, if not formally rescinded, appears to have been very soon neglected. Both are important, not from their earlier or later discontinuance, but as showing the intentions of Moses, than whom a more benevolent legislator never existed, so far as the comforts of his own people were concerned; though in the intensity of his national selfishness, he had no toleration whatever towards the Canaanites, and not much for the other gentiles. It is worthy of remark that the government he established, the only one immediately claiming a Divine author, was founded on the most democratical and even levelling principles. It was a theocratical commonwealth, having the Deity himself for its king. Agriculture was the basis of the Mosaic polity; all the husbandmen were on a footing of perfect equality; riches conferred no permanent pre-eminence; there were neither peasantry nor nobility, unless the Levites might be considered a sort of priestly aristocracy, for they were entitled by their birth to certain privileges.—But this is foreign to our purpose. The most distinguishing features of the government were the vigilant, the anxious provision made for the interests, enjoyments, and festivals of the nation, and that enlarged wisdom and profound knowledge of human nature which led the inspired founder of the Hebrew commonwealth to exalt and sanctify the pleasures of the people by uniting them with religion, while he confirmed and endeared religion by combining it with all the popular gratifications.

CHAPTER III.

Festivals, Games, and Amusements of the Ancient Greeks.

"Fas mihi Graiorum sacrata resolvere jura."
Virg. Æn. 3. 550.

Who would ever have imagined that the vivacious, intellectual, and handsome Athenians derived their origin from the gloomy, priestridden, negro-faced people of Egypt, a colony from which country was conducted to Attica by

Cecrops, about the time of Moses? We know that manners are changeable, that they receive their character from climate, soil, localities, population, religion, form of government, facility of communication with strangers, and various collateral circumstances; but we cannot understand how that great physical metamorphosis was accomplished which converted an ugly race into the most graceful and finely-formed nation upon the face of the earth. Nor have we any records on which to hang a conjecture; for at this period, as Plutarch says, when regretting his inability to furnish its early history, Attica was "all monstrous and tragical land, occupied only by poets and fabulists." Seven hundred years after the foundation of Athens, the writings of Homer afford many illustrations of manners among the Greeks, which still exhibited barbarous traits of defective government and unimproved society. From the notion that the souls of deceased warriors delighted in human blood, the funeral games and ceremonies were of the most cruel description. Achilles slew twelve of the young Trojan nobility at the pile of Patroclus; an act of atrocity which is of itself sufficient to stamp the character of barbarism upon the age in which it occurred. Half-naked savages, indeed, with a club and lion's skin, no longer wandered about the world, offering their services for the destruction of wild beasts; but the times were characterized by that licentiousness, hospitality, violence, utter disregard of human life, and union of dignified station with mean employments to which the manners of the Scottish Highlanders, till within a century, retained so marked a resemblance. Such will ever be the features of society where the law is ineffectual for personal security. "In such cases bodily strength and courage must decide most contests; while on the other hand, craft, cunning, and surprise are the legitimate weapons of the weak against the strong. We accordingly find that both the ancient and the modern history of the East is a continued scene of bloodshed and treachery."*

In the time of Homer, when murders were so common that they scarcely left a stain upon the character of the perpetrator, and human sacrifices were still offered to the gods, and to the manes of the dead, we cannot expect to

* Robertson's Charles V.

discover any thing refined, still less intellectual, in the amusements or recreations. These were grovelling and sensual, while the public games, being simply calculated to exercise and strengthen the bodily powers, were but personal struggles, scarcely amicable in their nature, and evidently intended as preparations for war. Several hundred years later, when the Athenians had attained their palmiest state, both as to power and literary pre-eminence, we have abundant materials for appreciating Grecian manners in general, which then present to us, so far as amusements are concerned, a decided predominance of the intellectual over the corporeal, of refinement over vulgar sensuality. Let us indulge in an imaginary walk into Athens at this period, that we may judge for ourselves, taking our first station on the road to Thria, to the north-west of the city. Behold! the sun is now gleaming upon the waters of the Cephisus, burnishing the tops of the trees in the garden of the Academy, just revealing beyond them the pediment of the temple of Theseus, and illuminating one side of the glorious Parthenon, perched aloft upon the rocky Acropolis. We will stand aside for a moment, not only to avoid the dust of the market-people flocking into the city, but that we may listen to the ancient ballads they are singing, an amusement which implies something of a civilized and literary taste, even in these rude peasants. They have passed, they have crossed the bridge over the Cephisus, and we may now follow them, diverging, however, from the high road into the shady walks on either side that constitute the grove of Academus. It was here that Plato, the pupil of Socrates, instructed his disciples, maintaining the immortality of the soul, while he placed the sovereign felicity in studying the beautiful, the true, the good; in contemplating the supreme celestial intelligence, and in endeavouring to conciliate his love, by imitating his benevolence, so far as human infirmities allowed.

Such have been the sublime doctrines taught by the academicians and philosophers who since his time have delivered lessons of wisdom within these shady precincts; and such are the discourses to which the volatile population of Athens have eagerly crowded for amusement and recreation. What an immeasurable stride must the public mind have taken since the Homeric ages, when all enjoyments had

reference to the body and the senses! but that we may the better appreciate the character of the citizens, let us ascend this little eminence, and survey the public buildings which, exclusively of the religious edifices, are expressly dedicated to the pleasures of the mind. See! we have now reached the altar of the Muses, whose votaries may in some degree be said to hallow literature with a divine sanction. Yonder to the east, near the Marathon road, is the Cynosarges, or school of the cynic philosophers; beyond it is the Lycæum, where Aristotle instructed his disciples while he walked about and founded the sect of the peripatetic philosophers; near the gate of the Piræus is the Museum, a building dedicated to the liberal arts, and to the goddesses whose name it bears; the superb structure to the left of it is the Odeum, appropriated to the performance of concerts, to musical trials of skill, and to the rehearsal of the theatrical choruses; and the semicircular building on this side of it is the Great Theatre, to which the Athenians flock to weep at the tragedies of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, to be convulsed with laughter at the farcical satires of Aristophanes, or to be delighted with the polished wit of the chaste and elegant Menander. Is not such a recapitulation sufficient to prove that in this classic seat of the muses the pleasures of the mind have largely triumphed over those of the body, and that the inhabitants of Athens are the most intellectual people whom the world has yet produced, or whom it is perhaps hereafter destined to see, even in a much more advanced state of its existence?

That all their diversions are of this exalted character it would be too much to expect; but we will pursue our walk, and make our observations as we proceed. Here we are at the gate Dipylon, in the shade of which some idlers of the lower class are reclining, while they play at dice upon the pavement, and by their animated gestures and the anxious expression of their countenances are evidently contending for a stake of some importance. Strange! that the love of deep play should be equally found among the most savage and the most civilized people, as if gambling were an inherent propensity of human nature! So addicted to dice were the Germans and other barbarians of the north, that, according to Tacitus, after having lost every thing else, they would frequently stake their freedom upon the hazard of a die, and

be sold into perpetual slavery without a murmur or an attempt to escape. Every throw of these Athenians, as you may gather from their exclamations, has the name of some god, prince, or hero, the most favourable of all being called Venus. The gamblers on the other side of the gate, engaged at a different game, employ only three dice, which they throw through a hollow cylinder upon a checker-board, in order to prevent cheating. These are games of pure chance; but yonder is a party playing at a table marked with lines and pyramidal points, on which are ranged pieces or men of different colours, the skill of the combatant being shown by sustaining his own men, and capturing or blocking up those of his adversary. Sometimes this game is played with dice, the movements being regulated by the number thrown, but still so as to leave room for much judgment and intricate combination on the part of the player.*

Here we are in the crowded forum, the centre of which is still occupied with the market people and others of the lower class, whose satirical pleasantries with one another and gibing raillery upon the passengers, though not always refined, are never deficient in the drollery and facetiousness that characterize while they form the constant amusement of the Athenian populace. These porticoes and colonnades will presently be thronged with loungers, newsmongers, and philosophers, each seeking their appropriate recreation, and indulging in eager discourse adapted to the different tastes of the colloquists; for among the lively Athenians even the stoics are social and loquacious, and lonely meditation is but little practised. The crowd flocking down this street to the left are hastening to the gymnasium, and those pursuing the direction of the river are hurrying to the baths, the use of which is considered so indispensable, that they are not only found in most of the private houses, but have even been introduced on board ship.

This stream of passengers on foot and on horseback, this throng of carters, water-carriers, criers of edicts, labourers, and beggars with their dancing dogs, pushing in all directions with an ardour that will not allow of ceremony, begins

* The former game is presumed to have borne some resemblance to chess, and the latter to backgammon.

to be irksome; we will therefore withdraw under this colonnade, where we may enjoy the scene without being incommoded by its bustle. Some of the higher classes are now beginning to appear, as you may perceive by the chariots and gaily-adorned litters, few of which are suffered to pass without taunts or jeering remarks from the poorer citizens. Many of the former are followed by a servant carrying a folding chair, that their masters may sit down when fatigued. Most of the men, you will observe, are provided with a cane, and the women with a parasol, but no external mark of wealth or station can exempt them from the raillery of their bantering fellow-countrymen. Such is the mania, even among the educated classes, for this species of recreation, that there is a society at Athens "whose only object is to observe and collect every species of ridiculous absurdity, and to divert itself with pleasantries and *bon-mots*. The members of it, to the number of sixty, are all men of extraordinary vivacity and brilliant wit: their meetings are held from time to time in the temple of Hercules, where they pronounce their humorous decrees in presence of a crowd of spectators, drawn thither by the singularity of the scene; nor have the misfortunes of the state ever induced them to intermit their meetings."*

Materials for the satire and the raillery of such a society can never be wanting in a city like Athens. Look! there are two individuals approaching us, who, though they are as dissimilar as possible in their appearance, are both equally calculated to excite and justify the ridicule of these professed wags. One of them, a smooth-shaven fop, who in his affectation of attic elegance is dressed in the extremity of the fashion, loads the air with perfume as he picks his way along the colonnade, simpering to display his white teeth, arranging the flowers at his ears, dangling his twisted cane, and occasionally looking down with an air of complacency at his Alcibiades shoes. The other, affecting the laconomania or the rough manners of the Spartans, wears a coarse cloak and plain sandals; his long beard is untrimmed, his hair falls in disorder about his shoulders, he carries a huge staff in his hand, and walks with a severe, solemn gait. The singularities of the former excite only a

* Travels of Anacharsis, vol. ii. cap 20.

smile or a sneer from the bystanders, but some of them seem disposed to treat the pretended simplicity of the latter as an insult to the national manners, at least if we may judge by the bitter sarcasms with which they pursue him.*

We have recorded the number of holydays kept by the Jews, which occupied a quarter of the year. Those observed by the lively pleasure-loving Athenians were still more numerous, upwards of eighty days being regularly devoted to public spectacles; none of which, it must be recollected, shared the character of the Jewish Sabbath, but were literally and throughout festive merrimakings. Exclusively of these local holydays and sports, there were the four great national festivals of the Olympian, Pythian, Isthmian, and Nemean games, each of which lasted several days; and all of which, from the narrow dimensions of the Grecian territory and the universal truce observed during their celebration, were accessible to all classes even in the midst of war. Nor were private entertainments of rare occurrence; for the birth of children, their enrolment as citizens, their first exhibition in the gymnasium, and numerous other occasions were also celebrated as festivals. In the Athenian calendar we find an abstract of all the glorious events by which their city has been distinguished; nor could a better method have been devised for attaching the people to the religion and the government, than by perpetuating the memory of these occurrences in the public solemnities. Some were celebrated with such magnificence that three hundred oxen were led to the altars at once amid every circumstance of sacrificial pomp. The earliest festivals of the Greeks, and indeed of all nations, were kept in the autumn, after gathering in the fruits of the earth, when gratitude prompted them to offer up sacrifices to heaven, and social festivities were the natural consequences of plenty. Ceres and Bacchus were therefore the chief primal divinities: spring and summer soon claimed their appropriate representatives and celebrations; and human heroes and benefactors next received the honours of the apotheosis, none of whom, probably, conferred such blessings on mankind by their living exploits, which could only affect a single age, as by their laying the foundation of a public festival to be

* Travels of Anacharsis, vol. ii. cap. 20.

enjoyed by long succeeding generations of a whole people. In the mode of celebrating these holydays at the politer age of Athens, there will be found a large admixture of the most refined mental enjoyments with the rude corporeal sports that characterized the Homeric era. The shows consisted of sacrifices which inspired reverence by the pomp of their solemnization; processions calculated to display the charms of the youth of both sexes; musical theatrical pieces, the productions of the finest geniuses of Greece; dances, songs, and combats, in which strength, skill, and talent were by turns exhibited. The persons of all the actors were inviolable during the festival, nor could any individual be arrested for debt at this period of general amusement and happiness.

In the constitution of the scenic representations, of which the chorus formed so remarkable a portion, the intellectual may be said to predominate; while the ancient festivals addressed themselves more especially to the eyes and the senses. Each of the ten tribes furnished a chorus, and a choragus, or leader, who was ineligible under forty years of age, and with whom rested the choice of the performers, generally selected from the class of children or of youths. An excellent player on the flute to direct their voices and an able master to regulate their steps and gestures were indispensable. As victory might depend on the superior skill of these teachers, they were publicly drawn for by lot, and generally proceeded to exercise their pupils some months previous to the festival. The choragus, whose functions were not only consecrated by religion, but ennobled by the example of the most eminent men of the state, who had deemed it an honour to fill that expensive office, appeared at the festival as well as his followers with a gilt crown and a magnificent robe. Each tribe was anxious to engage the most celebrated poet to compose the sacred hymns, the success of which depended upon the sentiments and style more than upon the accompanying music.

It was the province of the chorus to appear in the pomps or processions, to range themselves round the altars, to sing hymns during the sacrifice, and to assist in the theatrical representations, where they exerted themselves with the utmost ardour to maintain the reputation of their respective tribes. "The people, almost as jealous of their pleasures as of their liberty, waited the decision of the contest with

the same anxiety, the same tumult, as if their most important interests were the subject of discussion. The glory resulting from the victory was shared between the triumphant chorus, the tribe to which it belonged, and the masters who gave the preparatory lessons."*

The festival of the Panathenæa, instituted in the earliest ages in honour of Minerva, and revived by Theseus, had received so many additions since its first establishment, that it finally assumed a mixed character in which the intellectual and corporeal competitors were pretty equally balanced. As this was one of the most important of the public festivals of Athens, we shall give an outline of the mode in which it was celebrated, reminding the reader that it occurred in the first month, which began at the summer solstice; the greater Panathenæa being quinquennial, and the smaller annual. Upon these occasions every Athenian city and colony sent the tribute of an ox to Minerva, the goddess having the honour of the hecatomb, and the people the profit, for the flesh of the victims served to regale the spectators. We may trace the progress of public taste in the successive modifications and additions made to these sports. The first contest, which took place at night, and in which the athletæ carried flambeaux, was originally a foot-race, subsequently converted into an equestrian course; the second, a gymnastic contest, was held for some centuries in a rude stadium constructed by Lycurgus, the Rhætor, but magnificently rebuilt at a later period by the celebrated Herodes Atticus; the third exhibition, instituted by Pericles, was destined to poetry and music.

All the people of Attica, as the name of the festival imports, being expected to assist in its celebration, were to be seen at the period of its occurrence, wearing a chaplet of flowers, crowding to the capital with their victims. The sports began in the morning by horse-races on the banks of the Ilissus, in which the sons of the most distinguished citizens contended for the victory. Next came the wrestling and gymnastic exercises, in the stadium, succeeded by the gentler and less perilous competitions in the odeum, where the most exquisite musicians executed rival pieces on the flute, or cithara, while others sang, and accompanied their

* Anacharsis, vol. ii. cap. 24.

voices with instrumental music. The subject prescribed to them was the eulogy of Harmodius, Aristogeiton, and Thrasybulus, who had rescued the republic from the yoke of tyranny; for among the Athenians these institutions served to commemorate the patriots who had benefited their country, as well as to excite the spectators to an imitation of their virtues. Poets also contended for the theatrical prize, each being allowed to produce four pieces: the prize, in this instance, was an olive crown, and a vessel of the finest oil, which the victors, by a special privilege, might export whithersoever they pleased beyond the Athenian territory. Crowns were afterward conferred on other individuals, who appeared to the people to have merited that mark of honour.

The procession to the temple of the Pythian Apollo, which formed part of the ceremony, was composed of different classes of citizens, crowned with garlands, among whom were seen old men of a majestic and venerable appearance, bearing branches of olive; others of middle age, armed with lances and bucklers as if ready to engage in war; youths, from eighteen to twenty, who sang hymns in honour of the goddess Minerva; beautiful boys, clad in a simple tunic; and lastly girls selected from the first families in Athens, and attracting every eye by their features, shape, and deportment. With their hands they held baskets on their heads, which, under a rich veil, contained sacred utensils, cakes, and every thing necessary for the sacrifices: they were attended by females, holding over them an umbrella with one hand, and carrying a folding chair in the other, a species of servitude imposed on the daughters of all foreigners settled at Athens. Next followed musicians, playing on the flute and the lyre; rhapsodists, singing the poems of Homer; and armed dancers, who in their occasional attacks upon each other represented, to the sound of the flute, the battle of Minerva with the Titans.

But the most attractive part of the spectacle was a stately ship, impelled by concealed machinery, though it appeared to glide over the ground by the power of the wind and the efforts of numerous rowers. On its sail, which represented the peplus or white sleeveless robe of Minerva, the inventress of the useful art of spinning, were embroidered not only the memorable actions of that goddess,

but those of Jupiter, and of the Athenian heroes and patriots. This procession, attended by the magistrates and a numerous suite, all bearing olive-branches, advanced with solemn steps through an immense crowd, mostly placed on scaffolds erected for the occasion, or thronging the terraced roofs of the houses, to the temple of the Pythian Apollo, where the sail was taken down and deposited in the citadel.

At night there was a torch-race of nimble-footed young men, stationed at equal distances, the first of whom, on a signal given by the shout of the multitude, lighted his flambeau at the altar of Prometheus, and running with it handed it to the second, who transmitted it in the same manner to the third, and so on in succession. He who suffered it to be extinguished was excluded from the lists, and they who slackened in their pace were exposed to the railleries and even blows of the populace. None could gain the prize without having passed through all the stations with success.*

The candidates who had been crowned, together with their friends, partook of sumptuous repasts which lasted all night; while the people, among whom the immolated victims were distributed, spread tables on every side, and gave a loose to their lively and tumultuous mirth.†

CHAPTER IV.

Ancient Greek and Roman Drama.

"Hæc de comœdis te consulit; illa tragœdum."
Juven.

In the festivals and sports of which we have thus attempted a brief outline, originated the drama; too prominent in the list of Grecian amusements to be passed over unnoticed, although we are compelled to treat it in a cur-

* Which was probably an arduous task, for Aristophanes, in "The Frogs," taunting the Athenians with their effeminacy, says, that few were left who had sufficient strength to run in the torch-race.

† Anacharsis, cap. 24.

sory and superficial manner, as it is our purpose to give a fuller history of the theatre in connexion with the more interesting subject of the English stage. The performers in the different Grecian games being compelled by law to represent the life and exploits of the deity or hero in whose honour they were instituted, had already laid the basis of the drama, long before Thespis, improving upon the hint thus afforded, conceived the idea of introducing other actors to relieve the chorus, and render the progress of the story more intelligible and vivid. This founder of the stage, who flourished about 536 years before Christ, took for his subjects the historical traditions of Greece, which he embellished by appropriate fictions, an innovation highly displeasing to Solon the legislator of Athens. "If we applaud falsehood in our public exhibitions," said he to Thespis, "we shall soon find that it will insinuate itself into our most sacred engagements." Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides not only increased the number of characters, one of which became the hero of the piece, but perfected the dresses and scenic illusions, banished murders from the stage, and restricted the functions of the chorus, which now only occupied a subordinate station. The first of these writers has been censured for having admitted mute characters into his drama. "Achilles after the death of his friend, and Niobe after the destruction of her children, appear on the stage, and remain during several scenes motionless, their heads covered with a veil and without uttering a word; but if their eyes had overflown with tears, and they had poured forth the bitterest lamentations, could they have produced an effect so terrible as this veil, this silence, and this abandonment to grief?"*

Lending himself to the popular belief that the ancient heroes had a more lofty and majestic stature than ordinary mortals, Æschylus raised his actors on high stilts or buskins, covering their features with a mask suitable to the characters they performed, and clothing them in flowing and magnificent robes. The inferior actors were also provided with appropriate masks and dresses. He obtained a handsome theatre, furnished with machines and embellished with decorations. "Here the sound of the trumpet was rever

* Anacharsis, cap. 69

berated, incense was seen to burn on the altars, the shades of the dead to arise from the tomb, and the fiends to rush from the gulf of Tartarus. In one of his pieces these infernal divinities appeared for the first time with masks of a horrid paleness, torches in their hands, serpents entwined in their hairs, and followed by a numerous retinue of dreadful spectres. It is said that at the sight of them, and the sound of their terrific howlings, terror seized on the whole assembly, women miscarried, and children expired with fear, and that the magistrates, to prevent similar accidents in future, commanded that the chorus should consist only of fifteen actors instead of fifty."

"By reducing heroism to its just standard, Sophocles lowered the style of tragedy, and banished those expres sions which a wild imagination had dictated to Æschylus, and which diffused terror through the souls of the spectators. Æschylus painted men greater than they can be, Sophocles as they ought to be, and Euripides as they are. By forcibly insisting on the important doctrines of morality, the latter was placed among the number of the sages, and will for ever be regarded as the philosopher of the stage."*

Modern writers may well be astonished at the great fertility of these ancient dramatists, especially as they were contemporaries, or nearly so. Although we only possess seven of the tragedies of Æschylus, he wrote ninety, of which forty were rewarded with the public prize. Of the one hundred and twenty composed by his pupil Sophocles, seven only have come down to us; and nineteen are extant of the seventy-five ascribed to Euripides. None of their successors ever attained the talent or rivalled the fame of these three illustrious fathers of tragedy.

The comedy of the same era, as conducted by Aristophanes and his contemporaries, was infinitely below our modern farces, and indeed hardly upon a par with our an cient mysteries and moralities, abounding as it did in vulgar indecent reflections and illiberal satire, and employing by turns parody, allegorical images, buffoonery, and travesties, in which the gods and heroes were rendered ridiculous by the contrast between their mean disguise and their real dignity. It appears as if the Athenians were jealous of their

* Anacharsis, cap. 69

deities in proportion to their contemptible character and utter worthlessness; for though they resented with a fierce intolerance any real or imaginary affront directed against them in the form of serious argument, they delighted in seeing them lampooned and burlesqued, indulging in immoderate laughter when the irreverent farces that bore the names of Bacchus and Hercules exposed the excessive poltroonery of the former, and the enormous voracity of the latter. To pander to the taste of the vulgar, the most celebrated authors sometimes furnished their actors with indecorous dresses and expressions, and sometimes put into their mouths virulent invectives against individuals, not only mentioning their names, but imitating their features on the actor's mask. Thus were Euripides, Socrates, and others persecuted by Aristophanes, the same audiences crowning the tragedies of the former, and the farcical burlesques into which they were turned by the latter.

Attempts were made to repress these gross abuses of the stage by various decrees, which, however, being found inconsistent with the nature of the government, or the genius of the people, were either forgotten or repealed; until at length a new enactment permitted persons attacked or ridiculed by the dramatists to prosecute them in a court of justice. By this measure, and some examples of its severe enforcement, the licentiousness of the stage was effectually checked, and the reform thus accomplished gradually extended itself to the accompaniments and composition of the drama, the extravagance of which had been unbounded. Fantastical and preposterous subjects no longer brought on the stage choruses of birds, wasps, frogs, and other animals, habited in a grotesque resemblance to the forms of these animals, and even attempting to imitate their inarticulate noises.* Human nature became a greater object

* As a sample of this extravaganza, we subjoin a translation of the opening chant of the chorus of frogs, in Aristophanes's comedy of that name.

Chorus.

" Brekeke-kesh—Koash! Koash!
Shall the choral choristers of the marsh
Be censur'd and rejected as hoarse and harsh,
And their chromatic essays depriv'd of praise?
No, let us raise afresh
Our obstreperous Brekeke-kesh;

of study, grossness and buffoonery were banished, as well as licentious personalities, and comedy continued to improve until it attained its highest degree of excellence under Menander, who flourished about 300 years before Christ, and by his chaste elegance, refined wit, and admirable judgment, received the appellation of prince of the new comedy.

In order that the reader may form some idea of the manner in which these pieces were represented, it must be recollected that the Grecian theatres, although not altogether dissimilar in form from a modern circus, were of much larger dimensions, and without any roof. During the performance no person was allowed to occupy that portion of the building correspondent to our pit, experience having shown that the voices of the actors could not be distinctly heard unless this space were entirely empty. The proscenium or stage was divided into two parts or terraces; the higher one being appropriated to the actors, and the lower one, which was ten or twelve feet above the pit, to the chorus, who could thus easily turn either towards the performers or the audience. At a later period the Roman theatres were provided with immense awnings, which drew over the greater portion of the top, so as to exclude the sun or rain; an improvement that seems to have been unknown to the Athenians, for we are told that in case of a sudden shower the spectators were obliged to take refuge in the adjacent porticoes and public buildings. Gratuitous representations always formed a part of the festivals; and it was during the celebration of the great Dionysia, which lasted several days, that the pieces intended for competition were brought forward. In these contests the victory was not easily achieved. Exclusively of one of the entertainments called Satyrs, an author opposed his antagonist with three tragedies, which may in some degree account for the great number written by the more eminent tragedians. The duration of these pieces was, however, limited by the clepsydra, or water-clock. Sophocles was the first who

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The customary croak and cry
Of the creatures at the theatres,
In their yearly revelry—
Brekeke-kesh—Koash! Koash!"

adventured to produce only a single tragedy, an innovation which became insensibly established. Beginning early in the morning the performance sometimes lasted the whole day, during which five or six dramas might be performed. Previously to their representation, all pieces were submitted to the principal archon, with whom rested the power of acceptance or rejection, and whose favour was accordingly courted by authors with great assiduity; the fortunate ones lauding his discrimination, while those whose pieces were rejected not unfrequently consoled themselves by making him the subject of their lampoons and epigrams. Athenian petulance, aggravated by disappointment, would naturally impart to these a peculiarly caustic character.

The crown, however, was neither bestowed by the archon nor by the tumultuous applauses of the assembly, but by judges drawn by lot, and engaged by oath to decide impartially; an honourable mode of awarding the palm, which can only be bestowed where audiences are gratuitously admitted, and authors desire no higher recompense than a laurel wreath. Besides the victor, the names of the two next in merit were proclaimed, while he himself, loaded with the applauses which the chorus had solicited for him at the conclusion of the piece, was frequently escorted home by some of the spectators, and usually gave an entertainment to his friends. As the superiority of the pieces written by Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides became established in the course of time, it was ordered that accurate copies of them should be preserved in some place of safety, that they should be annually recited in public, and that statues should be erected to their authors.

During the performance, the stage was never empty. Sometimes the chorus made its entry in the first scene; if later, it was introduced naturally, and it was necessary to assign a reason for its leaving the stage, however short the time of its disappearance. The division of a piece, and its distribution into interludes, during which the choral performers were considered as alone, and sang together, was entirely arbitrary. The chorus, which was usually understood to represent the people, and consisted latterly of fifteen in tragedy, and twenty-four in comedy, was composed of men and women, old and young, citizens or slaves, priests, soldiers, or others, according to the nature of the

piece. As they came upon the stage, their steps were regulated by a flute-player; in tragedy they generally advanced three in front and five deep, or five in front and three deep; in comedy they were usually arranged four in front and six deep, or the reverse. In the interludes they sang in parts, marching and countermarching, and performing different evolutions to the sound of the flute.

To acquire greater vigour and suppleness, for some of the parts, such as that of Ajax frantic, required extraordinary bodily powers, the actors occasionally exercised with the youthful athletæ; while others observed a strict regimen, that their voices might become more flexible and sonorous. Their pay must have been considerable, as it is recorded of one named Polus, that in two days he gained a talent, about 225*l.* sterling. Nor were their emoluments confined to a single city, for when they had acquired distinction on the Athenian stage, they were solicited by other states to contribute to the embellishment of their festivals. In singing, the voice of the performers was guided by a flute, and in declamation by a lyre, which prevented it from sinking and preserved a proper intonation, leaving the actor at liberty to accelerate or retard his delivery as he thought fit.

Two kinds of regulated dances formed an accompaniment of the ancient drama, one executed by the choral performers when some happy tidings compelled them to yield to the transports of their joy; the other appropriated to tragedy, and intended to represent actions, manners, and sentiments by different movements and inflections of the body. Where it was so difficult, from the largeness of the theatre, to be universally heard, it became necessary to have recourse to that language of nature which influences the passions by appealing to the eye; the Greeks, therefore, neglected nothing which might contribute to the perfection of theatrical dancing, or give effect to poetry and music by correspondent action. In the tragic dances all was dignified, noble, elegant, and in exquisite accordance with the music as well as the attitudes of the actor. Those of comedy, more free and familiar in their nature, were at one time disgraced by a licentiousness so gross that even Aristophanes made a merit of banishing them from his pieces.

The spectators usually expressed their disapprobation of an actor, first by low murmurs, then by loud laughter,

tumultuous exclamations, and violent hissings, stamping with their feet to oblige him to quit the stage, making him take off his mask that they might triumph in his shame, ordering the herald to call another performer, and sometimes even demanding that a disgraceful punishment should be inflicted on the unfortunate object of their dislike. So far, however, from any absurd stigma being attached to the profession, no one could be a member of it who had been dishonoured by any offence committed against the laws. Enjoying all the privileges of a free citizen, an actor might aspire to the most honourable employments of the state. Some possessed great influence in the public assemblies; a celebrated performer, named Aristodemus, was sent on an embassy to Philip, King of Macedon; and Æschylus, Sophocles, and Aristophanes, like our own Shakspeare, held it no degradation to act a part in the pieces they had composed. Extraordinary expedients were sometimes used by the actors to excite their own feelings, and awaken the sympathies of the audience. In one of the tragedies of Sophocles the princess Electra embraces the urn which she imagines to contain the ashes of her brother Orestes. Polus, the Athenian, in enacting the part of Electra, for there were no female performers, caused the urn containing the remains of a son whom he had lately lost to be brought from his tomb, and when it was presented to him upon the stage, "he seized it with a trembling hand, and taking it in his arms, pressed it to his heart, uttering accents of such lively grief, so moving, and so fearfully expressive, that the whole theatre resounded with exclamations; and the spectators shed torrents of tears in commiseration of the unhappy fate of the son, and the wretched condition of the father."*

From the necessity of rendering the drama as intelligible as possible by visible signs, the age, rank, sex, and condition of every performer was generally indicated by his dress. Those suffering under misfortunes wore black, brown, or dirty white garments which frequently hung in tatters; and in all cases the disguise was assisted by a painted mask, which, covering the whole head like a helmet, substituted an artificial visage, provided with different-

* Anacharsis, cap. 70.

coloured hair or beards, or representing the charms of youth and beauty; the enormous mouth being sometimes lined with sonorous substances to assist the power of the voice. An individual portrait of a deity or a hero might be suggested by this clumsy contrivance, but the play of passion upon the countenance of the performer was necessarily sacrificed, while the expression of the visor itself, although it might portray the predominant feeling of the character, and might be changed with every scene, must sometimes have been at direct variance with the sentiments uttered. The voice, too, could no longer preserve its natural modulation, its intonations were abrupt and harsh, the laugh lost its effect, and nothing can be conceived more ridiculous to behold, more destructive of all sympathy between the audience and the actor, than the sight of a hideous mouth, motionless while the performer was speaking, and continually gaping when he was silent. Such were the defects inseparable from the colossal size of the theatres. It must be recollected, however, that as the female characters were performed by men, this contrivance assisted the illusion; and that in pieces similar to the Menæchmi of Plautus, whence Shakspeare's Comedy of Errors is taken, in which the plot turns on the mistake of one person for another, the use of masks would give a greater air of probability to the incidents.

When the performances were concluded, different bodies of magistrates ascended the stage, and made libations on an altar consecrated to Bacchus, thus elevating the theatrical entertainments by impressing upon them a character of sanctity. As the rules of perspective became better understood, the scenery seems to have attained a considerable degree of perfection, although in tragedy the action was usually supposed to pass in the vestibule of a palace or a temple, and did not require many changes. The opening display was sometimes very beautiful and grand. "Aged men, women, and children are beheld prostrate near an altar imploring the protection of the gods and the aid of their sovereign. Youthful princes arrive in a hunting-dress, and surrounded by their friends and their dogs, sing hymns in honour of Diana; or a chariot appears, which brings in solemn pomp to the camp of the Greeks Clytemnestra, attended by her slaves, and holding the infant Orestes

sleeping in her arms. Here Ulysses and Diomede enter by night the Trojan camp, through which they quickly spread alarm, the sentinels running together from all sides, crying *Stop! stop! kill! kill!* There the Grecian soldiers, after the taking of Troy, appear on the roofs of the houses, and begin to reduce that celebrated city to ashes. At another time coffins are brought, containing the bodies of the chiefs who fell at the siege of Thebes; their funerals are celebrated on the stage, and their widows express their grief in mournful songs. One of them, named Evadne, is seen on the top of a rock, at the foot of which is erected the funeral pile of Capaneus, her husband. She is habited in her richest ornaments; and, deaf to the entreaties of her father and the cries of her companions, precipitates herself into the devouring flames."

"The marvellous also adds to the charm of the exhibition. Some god descends in dramatic machinery; the shade of Polydorus bursts from the bosom of the earth; the ghost of Achilles appears to the assembly of the Greeks, and commands them to sacrifice the daughter of Priam; Helen ascends to the vault of heaven, where she is transformed into a constellation; or Medea traverses the air in a car drawn by dragons."*

Theatrical thunder was produced by causing stones to fall from a great height into a brazen vessel; and machines were constructed which not only served for effecting flights through the air, the descent of deities, or the apparition of ghosts, but by turning on rollers presented to the spectators the inside of a house or tent. We have said, during the festivals the exhibitions were gratuitous, which was virtually, though not literally, the case. An obolus, equal to about three halfpence of our money, was demanded at the doors; but Pericles, finding probably that the Athenian populace, like that of Rome, required little more than bread and the public shows, caused a decree to be passed, by which it was enacted that the magistrates, before every dramatic performance, should distribute to each of the poorer citizens two oboli; one to pay for his place, and another to assist in the supply of his wants during the festival. This soon

* See the seventieth chapter of Anacharsis, from which these observations on the Greek stage have been mostly abridged.

degenerated into an enormous abuse, the revenues of the state being appropriated to the pleasures of the multitude: nor could so popular a misapplication of the public money be subsequently rectified; for when one of the orators proposed to repeal the law of Pericles, the general assembly passed a decree forbidding any further mention of the subject under pain of death.

As the Roman theatre bore a close resemblance to that of the Greeks, from which indeed it was chiefly borrowed, it will require but little notice. In some respects the Romans differed from their prototypes. The profession of an actor was not only declared infamous, but those who practised it were deprived of the rights of citizens; yet the histrionic art must have been held in high estimation, for the celebrated tragedian, Æsop, after a life of unbounded profusion, left at his death a sum equivalent to 160,000*l.*; and other performers were equally prosperous. Such was their influence, too, with the public, that every eminent actor had his party; and their absurd factions engendered so many brawls and riots, not unfrequently terminating in bloodshed, that in the reign of Tiberius the players were banished from Italy altogether. From this blow the regular drama never recovered; but the dancers and buffoons gradually returned to and usurped the stage, of which they thenceforward kept undisputed possession.

Authors, on the other hand, appear to have been very indifferently remunerated; the largest sum ever paid for any dramatic work having been given to Terence for one of his most esteemed comedies, and this did not exceed 50*l.* of our currency. At first the Roman comedy was wholly borrowed from the Greeks, and when they ventured upon original composition, they soon lost in purity of taste more than they gained in originality; for after the fall of the republic the stage degenerated until it was finally abandoned, as we have just stated, to dancers and buffoons. Their tragedy was of late introduction, and the remains that have come down to our times are too scanty to allow us to pronounce upon their general merit.

After the play amateurs usually performed a farce, termed an *Atellane* comedy, wherein the actors composed an extemporaneous dialogue, which often degenerated into gross ribaldry. These performers could not be compelled by the

audience to unmask, nor were they, like other actors, deprived of their civil rights. Between the acts were generally introduced interludes of tumbling, rope-dancing, and pantomimical representations, which, as the public taste declined, eventually superseded the regular drama. It is recorded that the emperor Galba possessed an elephant which walked upon a rope stretched across the theatre; and there is reason to suppose that similar exhibitions formed part of the amusements.

A singular custom prevailed upon the Roman stage, the occasional division of the same part between two actors, the one reciting while the other accompanied him with appropriate gestures. It is conjectured to have originated from the necessity of sparing some particular performer, rendered hoarse by reiterated repetitions of favourite passages; but it does not appear that this anomalous practice was ever extended to dialogue.

The sock or low-heeled shoe of the comedians merely covered the foot; the high buskin of the tragedians reached to the mid-leg; whence these words were used to denote the different styles of comedy and tragedy. Pantomime actors usually performed barefooted, though on some occasions they wore wooden sandals. Professed dancers used castanets, playing them in unison with the music, as still practised in many parts of the continent. It appears that the chief female dancers were Spaniards of the province of Andalusia, and that their mode of exhibition was then as remarkable as now for its voluptuousness. Hence it has been conjectured that the same fandango and bolero which charms the present audiences of Madrid once delighted the inhabitants of ancient Rome.

CHAPTER V.

Public Games of the Grecians.

"Digredimur, lentaque fori pugnamus arena."
Juv. 16. 47.

THERE seems to have been something nationally characteristic in the ancient notations of time. The devout Jews, referring all things to the Deity, reckoned from the creation of the world; the Egyptians, Persians, and other enslaved nations counted by dynasties and the succession of kings; the patriotic Romans commenced their chronology with the foundation of their city and the consular government; the ancient Argives reckoned by the succession of the priestesses of Juno, their patron goddess; but the Greeks, in general a vivacious, pleasure-loving people, began at a very early period to mark their time either by the recurrence of their local festivals, or by the periodical returns of the great national jubilee, when the Olympic games were celebrated, held after the completion of every fourth year. These games, which in the midst of war were not only signals for a general truce, but for a fraternal commingling of the fiercest enemies in the common enjoyment of sports, pastimes, and festivity, must have had a most healing and humanizing effect upon the whole Grecian people; while they enlivened their chronology with pleasant remembrance of the past, and joyous anticipations of the future. They who reflect how deeply the love of pleasure, more especially of public spectacles, was implanted in the mind of the Greeks, and how much more vivid is the hope of future than even the possession of present enjoyment, will duly appreciate the great political wisdom of instituting these national festivals, and will not lightly estimate the degree of happiness which the anticipation of their recurrence was capable of diffusing throughout the whole of Greece.

Exclusively of the local festivals, some of which we have already briefly noticed, there were public games in different parts of Greece, which, being open to the participation of every inhabitant of the country, might be strictly termed

national. Of these the most celebrated were the Olympic, the Pythian, the Nemean, and the Isthmian; the first dedicated to Jupiter, the second to Apollo, the third to Archemorus originally, though renewed in honour of Hercules after the destruction of the Nemean lion; the fourth, which took their name from the Isthmus of Corinth, where they were celebrated, were consecrated to Neptune. These were the four great solemn public festivals of the Greeks, which, by instilling into them at a rude and barbarous era a disinterested love of fame, for the noblest reward was a simple laurel wreath, by inspiring them with a love of the arts, and by imbuing them with the spirit of social life, contributed not less to their aggrandizement over other nations, than to the advancement of civilization among themselves.

According to some writers, the Pythian games, celebrated near the temple of Delphi, were instituted by Apollo himself in commemoration of his victory over the serpent Python; though others maintain that they were first established by the council of the Amphictyons 1263 years before Christ. They were originally held once in nine years, but afterward every fifth year, consisting in their earlier course of a simple musical contention, wherein he who best sang the praises of Apollo obtained the prize, which was a garland of the palm-tree, or of beech-leaves. Hesiod, it is said, was refused admission to these games from his inability to play upon the harp, which was required of all such as entered the lists. The songs called the Pythian modes were divided into five parts, containing a representation of the victory of Apollo over Python in the following order:—the preparation for the fight; the first attempt; taking breath and collecting courage; the insulting sarcasms of the god over his vanquished enemy; an imitation of the hisses of the serpent just as he expired under the blows of Apollo. Appropriate dances were introduced, which, combining with vocal and instrumental music in the representation of a story, would bear no very remote resemblance to a modern opera; and suggested doubtless to Thespis, as has been already intimated, the first hint of the drama. The Romans are thought to have introduced these games into their city under the name of *Apollinares ludi*.

Various reasons are assigned for the first institution of the Nemean games, though most writers concur in ascribing their renewal and enlargement to Hercules, after his

destruction of the Nemean lion. The Argives, Corinthians, and the inhabitants of Cleonæ generally presided by turns at their celebration, which occurred every fifth, or, according to some authorities, every third year, and consisted of foot, chariot, and horse-races, boxing, wrestling, and gymnastic contests of every kind, to which were subsequently added singing and music. The conqueror was rewarded with a crown of olive until the time of the war against the Medes, when a check experienced by the Greeks occasioned them to substitute parsley, which was a funeral plant. The celebration of these games served as an epoch to the Argives, and to the inhabitants of that part of Arcadia which bordered upon the Nemean forest.

The Isthmian games, instituted 1350 years before Christ, were exhibited near a fine wood that shaded a magnificent temple of Neptune, in the vicinity of Corinth. Being originally celebrated at night, they rather resembled nocturnal mysteries than public spectacles. After having been suspended for some time on account of the great number of robberies and murders committed during their performance they were restored by Theseus, eleventh king of Athens, after he had cleared the country of the banditti who infested it. On their re-establishment they were exhibited during the day, and solemnly consecrated to Neptune, Theseus stipulating with the people of Corinth, in return for the service he had rendered them, that the Athenians should not only be entitled to the front ranks during the performances, but that there should be a space between their seats and the others, as wide as the sail of the vessel in which they should arrive from Athens; a condition which shows the great importance attached to these national spectacles, and to the possession of the most honourable places. Like the other games, they consisted originally of races, and trials of bodily strength or skill, to which were eventually added competitions in music and poetry. The concourse of spectators was usually so great, that none but the principal inhabitants of the Grecian cities could be provided with places.

But it was under the Romans that the Isthmian games attained their greatest magnificence, for besides the exhibitions we have enumerated, they introduced the hunting of wild beasts, collecting for that purpose the most uncommon animals from every quarter of the world. These games,

which furnished an epoch to the Corinthians and the neighbouring people, were held so inviolable, that even a public calamity could not prevent their celebration. When Corinth was destroyed by Mummius, the Roman general, they continued to be observed with no other alteration than that the right of superintendence was transferred to the Sicyonians, though it was subsequently restored to the Corinthians. Not long after this occurrence, during the performance of the Isthmian games, the victorious Romans, by an act of apparent generosity, emanating however from the political wisdom that governed all their councils at that period, made a public and solemn restoration of liberty to the whole of Greece. Livy thus relates the event, which, from its theatrical air, is exceedingly characteristic of the times.

An innumerable multitude of people had crowded to the Isthmian games, either attracted by the natural passion of the Greeks for public shows, or from the accessibility of the place, which, being between two seas, allowed an easy approach from all quarters. The Romans having taken their place in the assembly, the herald advanced into the middle of the arena, and having procured silence by sound of trumpet, pronounced aloud the following decree: "The Senate, the Roman people, and the General Titus Quintius Flaminius, after having conquered the King of Macedonia, declare that henceforward the Corinthians and all the people of Greece, formerly subjected to the dominion of Philip, shall enjoy their liberty, their immunities, and their privileges, and shall be governed by their own laws."

Filled with astonishment, doubting their own ears, and taking for a dream that which had passed before their eyes, the people gazed for some moments at one another, and then calling upon the herald to repeat his announcement, pressed tumultuously around him that they might not only hear but see the proclaimer of their liberty. After the herald had repeated the same formula, the whole assemblage abandoned themselves to an ungovernable transport of joy, filling the air with such loud and reiterated acclamations that it was easy to see they valued their liberty as the most precious of all boons. In confirmation of this remark, the historian adds, that it even took away their enjoyment of the pending games, since they could hear, see, talk, and think of nothing but their newly-proclaimed liberty. This great event occurred 194 years before Christ.

At a subsequent celebration Nero renewed in person the same promises, and conferred the right of Roman citizenship upon the Isthmian judges, whom he loaded with presents; but the Grecian people, oppressed with the yoke of their conquerors and the misfortunes which they had now endured for more than a century, only acknowledged his promises by feeble acclamations. Disheartened by the exactions of the prætors set over them, and losing those feelings of pride and patriotism by which they had been formerly animated, they had no longer the spirit to support the public shows, which insensibly lost their celebrity, and declined, until the Isthmian games entirely ceased in the reign of Adrian, about the 130th year of the Christian era.

Of these three festivals we have only furnished a brief outline, because it is our purpose to place more fully before the reader the order and succession of sports in the Olympic games, which were by far the most celebrated and magnificent of any. The sanctity and solemnity of that institution, the majesty and supremacy of the god to whom it was dedicated, and the great value set upon the Olympic crowns by every province of Greece, were sufficient arguments for furnishing it with an august founder; and this honour was accordingly ascribed in the first instance to Jupiter himself, after his defeat of the Titans. Others have assigned it to Hercules, maintaining that he caused the games to be first celebrated about 1222 years before our era; but all agree that after they had fallen into desuetude, they were revived and enlarged by the advice of Lycurgus, and the orders of a king of Elis named Iphitus; who, being deeply afflicted at the calamities under which his country was then suffering, consulted the oracle of Delphi for a remedy, and was told by the Pythoness that the safety of Greece depended upon the re-establishment of the Olympic games; the non-observance of which solemnity had drawn down the indignation of the god to whom they were dedicated, and of Hercules, the hero by whom they were instituted. There was probably more truth, and certainly more wisdom than usual in this answer of the oracle; for as the celebration of the games was to be preceded by a general truce among the belligerent states, the prediction was accomplished to a certain extent by this preliminary measure; while the amicable intercourse of the hostile parties wa

sure to soften the asperities of war, and not unlikely to produce a general peace. To this armistice Iphitus added a public mart or fair for the benefit of commerce, reduced the festival into a regular and coherent system, united the sacred and political institutions, provided for its regular recurrence at the commencement of every fifth year, and by making the epoch of its revival an Olympiad, or public era for the whole peninsula, imparted such a stability to the institution that it lasted with little variation for above a thousand years, a duration exceeding that of the most celebrated kingdoms and republics of antiquity. The first of these stated Olympiads, which constitutes the earliest regular and authentic notation of time among the heathen, occurred in the year of the world 3208, being 505 years after the taking of Troy, 776 years before the birth of Christ, and 24 years before the foundation of Rome.

Historians are incalculably indebted to this epoch, which, superseding the fables and inventions of the mythologists, first threw light into the confused chaos of time; but no one has acknowledged his obligations more fervently than Scaliger; who, though he seldom paid compliments, thus enthusiastically apostrophizes the Olympiads; "Hail, divine Olympiads! sacred depositories of truth, you who repress the audacious licentiousness of chronologists! It is you who throw a certain light upon history; were it not for you how many truths would be still buried in the night of ignorance! To you I address my homage, because it is by your means that we can fix with accuracy, not only the events that have occurred since your institution, but those that were done in the remote ages before it. By your help also we are enabled to fix the dates and epochas of the Holy Scriptures, notwithstanding what silly and ignorant people advance, who say that without the Holy Scriptures there would be no coming at the knowledge of thy epocha; than which nothing can be conceived more absurd and monstrous."

As the historical and other writers of ancient Greece and Rome are now coming daily into perusal even by our females, and the frequent mention of the Olympiads may often necessitate a comparison with the Christian era, we subjoin a table, by which the correspondent dates of the two modes of notation may be instantly ascertained.

TABLE FOR THE REDUCTION OF OLYMPIADS INTO YEARS BEFORE CHRIST.

Olym.	begins B. C.	Olym.	begins B. C.	Olym.	begins B. C.	Olym.	begins B. C.	Olym.	begins B. C.	Olym.	begins B. C.
1	776	34	644	67	512	100	380	132	252	164	124
2	772	35	640	68	508	101	376	133	248	165	120
3	768	36	636	69	504	102	372	134	244	166	116
4	764	37	632	70	500	103	368	135	240	167	112
5	760	38	628	71	496	104	364	136	236	168	108
6	756	39	624	72	492	105	360	137	232	169	104
7	752	40	620	73	488	106	356	138	228	170	100
8	748	41	616	74	484	107	352	139	224	171	96
9	744	42	612	75	480	108	348	140	220	172	92
10	740	43	608	76	476	109	344	141	216	173	88
11	736	44	604	77	472	110	340	142	212	174	84
12	732	45	600	78	468	111	336	143	208	175	80
13	728	46	596	79	464	112	332	144	204	176	76
14	724	47	592	80	460	113	328	145	200	177	72
15	720	48	588	81	456	114	324	146	196	178	68
16	716	49	584	82	452	115	320	147	192	179	64
17	712	50	580	83	448	116	316	148	188	180	60
18	708	51	576	84	444	117	312	149	184	181	56
19	704	52	572	85	440	118	308	150	180	182	52
20	700	53	568	86	436	119	304	151	176	183	48
21	696	54	564	87	432	120	300	152	172	184	44
22	692	55	560	88	428	121	296	153	168	185	40
23	688	56	556	89	424	122	292	154	164	186	36
24	684	57	552	90	420	123	288	155	160	187	32
25	680	58	548	91	416	124	284	156	156	188	28
26	676	59	544	92	412	125	280	157	152	189	24
27	672	60	540	93	408	126	276	158	148	190	20
28	668	61	536	94	404	127	272	159	144	191	16
29	664	62	532	95	400	128	268	160	140	192	12
30	660	63	528	96	396	129	264	161	136	193	8
31	656	64	524	97	392	130	260	162	132	194	4
32	652	65	520	98	388	131	256	163	128	195	1st
33	648	66	516	99	384					[year of our Lord.	

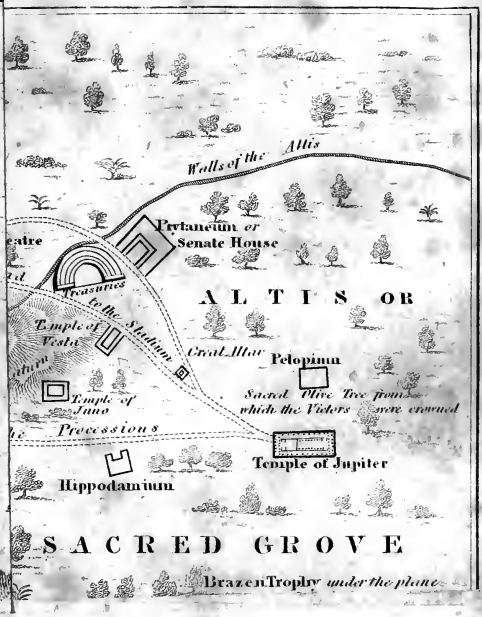
The computation by Olympiads ceased after the 304th, which corresponds with the 440th year of the Christian era.

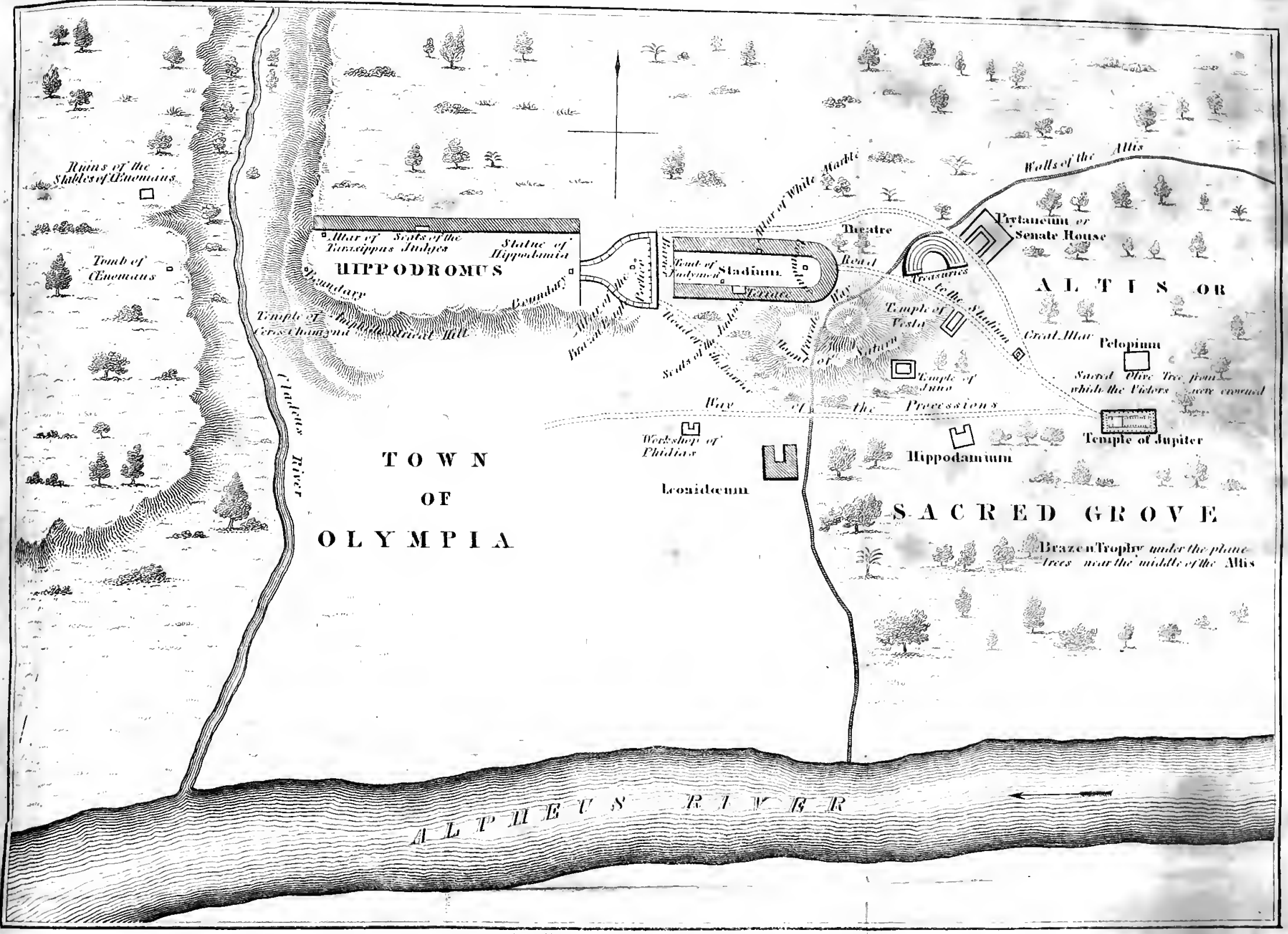
The festival, which lasted five days, commenced at the next full moon after the summer solstice, and was held at Olympia, in Elis, in the neighbourhood of which city was the hippodrome, the stadium, and the sacred grove containing the celebrated temple of the Olympian Jupiter, together with the theatre and other buildings appropriated to the games; of which, and of the environs where the vast multitude of spectators were collected, some idea may be formed from the annexed topographical plan, drawn from the work of the learned M. Barthelemy.

So extensive were the preparations for this spectacle, that the intervening period of four entire years did not always suffice for the completion of the necessary arrangements. The choice, breaking in, and exercising of the horses for the different races, as well as the selection and embellishment of the cars, was a work of time; the candidates were obliged to enrol their names some months beforehand, to swear that they had been regularly exercised during ten months; and thirty days before the games it was their duty to assemble at Elis, where they were again compelled to exhibit their strength and skill every morning, under the inspection of proper officers, until the games commenced. After this severe probation, first at home and then at Elis, they were dismissed on their departure for Olympia with the following exhortation: "If ye have exercised yourselves in a manner suitable to the dignity of the Olympic games, and are conscious of having done no action that betrays a slothful, cowardly, and illiberal disposition, proceed boldly. If not, depart, all ye that are so minded!"

The city of Olympia, known also by the name of Pisa, was situated on the right bank of the Alpheus, and at the foot of an eminence called the Mount of Saturn, at an easy distance from the Ionian Sea. Within the Altis, which was a sacred wood surrounded with walls, stood the temple of Jupiter, containing the celebrated colossal statue of that deity by Phidias, besides an infinite variety of columns, trophies, triumphal cars, and innumerable statues in brass or marble, dispersed throughout all the avenues of the sacred precinct. All of these bore inscriptions specifying the motives of their consecration, the statues being mostly those of victors in the games, whose exploits were thus recalled to the assembled citizens of Greece every four years, and handed down to the latest posterity, through successive generations of admiring spectators.

For some days previous to the festival, crowds were seen flocking to Olympia in all directions by sea and land, from every part of Greece, and even from the most distant countries, for there was no part of the earth to which the fame of the Olympic games had not penetrated, and few people who were not intensely anxious to become spectators of them. The ceremonies opened in the evening with sacrifices upon all the altars, which were adorned with


Walls of the Altis
Prytaneum or Senate House
Treasuries
ALTIS OR
Temple of Vesta
to the Stadium
Great Altar
Pelopium
Temple of Juno
Sacred Olive Tree from which the Victors were crowned
Processions
Temple of Jupiter
Hippodamium
SACRED GROVE
Brazen Trophy under the plane



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TOPOGRAPHY OF OLYMPIA.

Vol. I. 60.

festoons, the principal offerings being reserved for the grand altar of Jupiter. These were upon a scale commensurate with the general magnificence of the celebration, all the principal cities of Greece sending victims for the Olympian Jupiter; while private individuals, especially those who had gained the honour of an Olympic victory, sometimes made very sumptuous sacrifices at their own expense. Alcibiades, after having gained three prizes in the chariot-race, feasted the whole concourse of Grecians that were gathered together to view the games with the victims offered to Jupiter, only a small part of which was consumed upon the altar. It is probable, indeed, that the vast multitudes collected upon these occasions were chiefly subsisted by the sacrifices provided by the different cities; of one or other of which every private Grecian had a right to partake. The sacrificial ceremonies, performed to the sound of instruments, and by the light of the moon, then near its full, were attended with every circumstance of magnificence and solemnity that could awaken admiration and inspire reverence. At midnight, when they ended, most of the spectators, with an eagerness that never deserted them during the whole festival, ran instantly to secure places in the course, the better to enjoy the spectacle of the games, which were to commence at daybreak.

The Elean people, represented by judges termed Hellanodichs, had the entire direction of every thing appertaining to the festival, being invested for the occasion with plenary authority to keep in perfect order that vast assemblage, composed of men of all ranks, and of every region and colony of Greece. Clothed in purple robes, and bearing the usual ensigns of magistracy, these judges seem to have sometimes exercised a sort of papal power, not only claiming the right to punish refractory or contumacious individuals, but to excommunicate whole nations, and cut them off from the right of participation in the festival. Lycurgus originally fixed the order of the athletic combats, which corresponded almost exactly with that described by Homer in the twenty-third book of the Iliad, and eighth of the Odyssey; but the judges had authority to modify and suspend any of them, or to add new games, according to circumstances. Never, however, did the Greeks, except for a short time at Corinth, adopt the cruel gladiatorial shows of the Romans never

did they regard them with any other feeling than that of disgust and horror; never did the polished Athenians admit any spectacle of that sort within their walls, notwithstanding the example of their conquerors, and of some of their own degenerate countrymen; and when a citizen once thought proper to propose publicly the introduction of these games, in order, as he said, that Athens might not be inferior to Corinth, "Let us first," cried an Athenian, with vivacity, "let us first overthrow the altar of Pity, which our ancestors set up more than a thousand years ago."

CHAPTER VI.

The Olympic Games.

"Sunt quos curriculo pulverem Olympicum
Collegisse juvat; metaque fervidis
Evitata rotis, palmaque nobilis
Terrarum dominos evehit ad Deos."
Horat. i. 1.

The Olympic course was divided into two parts—the stadium, and the hippodromus; the former of which was an elevated open causeway, six hundred feet long, being appropriated to the foot-races and most of the combats; while the latter was reserved for the chariot and horse-races. Pausanias has transmitted to us an accurate description of both, particularly of the hippodromus; but instead of a detail which would be little interesting to the general reader, we prefer copying the following animated picture of the scene exhibited at Olympia on the morning when the games were opened. "At the first dawn of day we repaired to the stadium, which was already filled with athletæ, exercising themselves in preparatory skirmishes, and surrounded by a multitude of spectators; while others in still greater numbers were stationing themselves confusedly on a hill, in form of an amphitheatre, above the course. Chariots were flying over the plain; on all sides were heard the sound of trumpets and the neighing of

horses, mingled with the shouts of the multitude. But when we were able to divert our eyes for a moment from this spectacle, and to contrast with the tumultuous agitations of the public joy the repose and silence of nature, how delightful were the impressions we experienced from the serenity of the sky, the delightful coolness of the air from the Alpheus, which here forms a magnificent canal, and the fertile fields, illumed and embellished by the first rays of the sun!"*

The candidates, having undergone an examination, and proved to the satisfaction of the judges that they were freemen, that they were Grecians by birth, and that they were clear from all infamous and immoral stains, were led to the statue of Jupiter within the senate-house. This image, says Pausanias, was better calculated than any other to strike terror into wicked men, for he was represented with thunder in both hands; and, as if that were not a sufficient intimation of the wrath of the deity against those who should forswear themselves, at his feet there was a plate of brass containing terrible denunciations against the perjured. Before this statue the candidates, their relations, and instructers swore on the bleeding limbs of the victims that they were duly qualified to engage, solemnly vowing not to employ any unfair means, but to observe all the laws relating to the Olympic games. After this they returned to the stadium, and took their stations by lot, when the herald demanded—"Can any one reproach these athletæ with having been in bonds, or with leading an irregular life?" A profound silence generally followed this interrogatory, and the combatants became exalted in the estimation of the assembly, not only by this universal testimony to their moral character, but by the consideration that they were the free unsullied champions of the respective states to which they belonged; not engaged in any vulgar struggle for interested or ordinary objects, but incited to competition by a noble love of fame, and a desire to uphold the renown of their native cities in the presence of assembled Greece. Such being the qualities required before they could enter the lists, it was some distinction

* Anacharsis, cap. 38.

even to have been an unsuccessful competitor, for each might truly exclaim in the words of Achelous, when defeated by Hercules,

Non tam
Turpe fuit vinci quam contendisse decorum.

Filled with anxiety, their friends gathered round them, stimulating their exertions, or affording them advice, until the moment arrived when the trumpet sounded. At this signal the runners started off amid the cries and clamour of the excited multitude, whose vociferations did not cease until the herald procured silence by his trumpet, and proclaimed the name and abode of the winner. The following is a translation of an epigram upon this subject in the Greek anthology, the hyperbole of which, when the poet describes the swiftness of the victor, may be compared with Virgil's upon Camilla. It must be borne in mind that Tarsus, the birthplace of the winner, was founded by Perseus, who in old fables is represented as having had wings upon his feet.

ON ARIAS OF TARSUS, VICTOR IN THE STADIUM.

The speed of Arias, victor in the race,
Recalls the founder of his native place,
For, able in the course with him to vie,
Like him he seems on feather'd feet to fly.
The barrier when he quits, the dazzled sight
In vain essays to catch him in his flight.
Lost is the racer thro' the whole career,
Till victor at the goal he reappear.

The prize of the simple foot-race in the stadium, as it was the most ancient, was deemed the most honourable of any; so much so, that the name of the victor was generally associated with the Olympiad, and quoted with it by writers and historians; a distinction which must have been more attractive than any other to a people so passionately fond of fame as the Greeks. To vary the diversions of the stadium, foot-races were afterward performed by children, by armed men, and by athletæ, who ran twelve times the length of the stadium. None of the victors were crowned till the last day of the festival, but at the end of the race they carried off a branch of palm, an emblem, says Plu-

tarch, of their insuperable vigour and resolution in triumphing over difficulties, since it is the nature of that plant to rise and flourish against all endeavours to bend or suppress it. In order to excite the greater emulation, the olive crowns as well as the palm-branches were deposited on a table of gold and ivory, placed within view of the competitors and of the whole assemblage. On his receiving the palm, every one pressed forward to see and congratulate the victor; his friends and relations embraced him with tears of joy, and, lifting him on their shoulders, held him up to the applauses of the spectators, who strewed handfuls of flowers over him.

The gymnastic exercises, which bore the name of the Pentathlon, consisted usually of leaping, running, quoiting, darting, and wrestling, the precise form and manner of which it is unnecessary to detail; though we may notice, before we quit this part of the subject, that the leapers performed to the sound of flutes playing Pythian airs, and that they seem to have had poles or some artificial assistance in jumping. This, indeed, would be necessary, if we are to credit an inscription, cited by Eustathius, on the statue of Phaulus of Crotona, which asserts that he had leaped a distance of fifty-five feet. Chionis, the Spartan, is said to have accomplished fifty-two.

The cæstus, a cruel and dangerous species of boxing, in which the hands and arms were furnished with gauntlets, loaded with lead or iron, was revived in the twenty-third Olympiad; but, as the victory in this game was frequently stained with blood, it was never held in much estimation by the Greeks, who evinced in their public sports none of the sanguinary ferocity that characterized the Romans. Damoxenus, a champion of the cæstus, having slain his adversary under circumstances of much cruelty and treachery, was not only refused the wreath, but driven from the stadium with every mark of infamy and indignation, while his deceased victim was solemnly crowned by the judges. The combatants in this exercise wore headpieces of brass for their defence, notwithstanding which they were often terribly mutilated, though they might escape with life and limb. The following epigram of Lucilius informs us that a cæstus-fighter once became so disfigured

that, being unable to establish his identity, he lost his inheritance to a younger brother.

ON A CONQUEROR IN THE CÆSTUS.

This victor, glorious in his olive wreath,
Had once eyes, eyebrows, nose, and ears, and teeth,
But turning cæstus-champion, to his cost,
These and, still worse, his heritage he lost!
For by his brother sued—disown'd—at last,
Confronted with his picture, he was cast.*

Aulus Gellius relates a singular story of one of the athletæ, a confirmed stammerer, who, being a candidate for one of the four sacred crowns, and perceiving the officer who was appointed to match the combatants fraudulently endeavouring to put a wrong lot upon him, cried out against it with such vehemence, that the impediment being suddenly cured, he continued for the rest of his life to speak without hesitation.

These gymnastic exercises, being the most ancient, took precedence of the horse and chariot-races, though the competitors in the latter were, generally speaking, men of higher rank and consideration than the athletæ, and the spectacle was much more pompous and magnificent. The richest individuals of Greece made a study and a merit of producing the species of horses best adapted for the course; thus accomplishing the original object of the institution, which probably had in view the improvement of the breed: and even sovereigns and republics frequently enrolled themselves among the competitors, intrusting their glory to able horsemen and charioteers. At one festival, seven chariots were entered in the name of the celebrated Alcibiades, three of which gained prizes, and furnished an occasion to Euripides for inscribing a complimentary ode to the conqueror. Over a bar that ran across the entrance of the lists was placed a brazen dolphin, and upon an altar in the middle of the barrier stood an eagle of the same metal. By means of a machine, put in motion by the president of the games, the eagle suddenly sprang up into the air with its wings extended, so as to be seen by all the spectators; and at the same moment the dolphin sank to the ground, which was

* Anthol. lib. ii. cap. 1. ep. 1.

the signal for the cars to arrange themselves in order for the race. Besides the statue of Hippodamia, and the table on which were placed the crowns and palm-branches, there were several images and altars in the course, particularly that of the genius Taraxippus, who, as his name imports, was said to inspire the horses with a secret terror, which was increased by the shrill clangour of the trumpets placed near the boundary, and the deafening shouts and outcries of the multitude.

While the chariots were ranged in line ready to start, the horses, whose ardour it was difficult to restrain, attracted all eyes by their beauty, as well as for the victories which some of them had already gained. Pindar speaks of no less than forty chariots engaged at one and the same time. If we recollect that they had to run twelve times the length of the hippodrome in going and returning, and to steer round a pillar or goal erected at each extremity, we may imagine what confusion must have ensued when, upon the signal trumpet being sounded, they started amid a cloud of dust, crossing and jostling each other, and rushing forward with such rapidity that the eye could scarcely follow them. At one of the boundaries a narrow pass was only left for the chariots, which often baffled the skill of the expertest driver; and there were upwards of twenty turnings to make round the two pillars, so that at almost every moment some accident happened, calculated to excite the pity or insulting laughter of the assembly. In such a number of chariots at full speed pushing for precedence in turning round the columns, on which victory often depended, some were sure to be dashed to pieces, covering the course with their fragments, and adding to the dangers of the race. As it was, moreover, exceedingly difficult for the charioteer in his unsteady two-wheeled car to retain his standing attitude, many were thrown out, when the masterless horses plunged wildly about the hippodrome, overturning others who had perhaps previously escaped every danger, and thought themselves sure of winning. To increase the confusion, and thereby afford better opportunities for the display of skill and courage, there is reason to believe that some artifice was employed for the express purpose of frightening the horses when they reached the statue of Taraxippus. So great sometimes was their consternation,

that no longer regarding the rein, the whip, or the voice of their master, they broke loose, or overturned the chariot and wounded the driver. Perhaps it would be impossible to give a more accurate description of a chariot-race in all its forms than is furnished by the following passage from the Electra of Sophocles, as translated by West. After enumerating the ten different competitors for the prize, the author proceeds—

These, when the judges of the games by lot
Had fix'd their order and arranged the cars,
All at the trumpet's signal, all at once,
Burst from the barrier, all together cheer'd
Their fiery steeds, and shook the floating reins.
Soon with the din of rattling cars was fill'd
The sounding hippodrome, and clouds of dust,
Ascending, tainted the fresh breath of morn.
Now mix'd and press'd together, on they drove,
Nor spared the smarting lash, impatient each
To clear his chariot, and outstrip the throng
Of clashing axles, and short-blowing steeds,
That panted on each other's necks, and threw
On each contiguous yoke the milky foam.
But to the pillar as he nearer drew,
Orestes, reining in the nearmost steed,
While in a larger scope with loosen'd reins,
And lash'd up to their speed the others flew,
Turn'd swift around the goal his grazing wheel
As yet erect upon their whirling orbs
Roll'd every chariot, till the hard-mouthed steeds
That drew the Thracian car unmaster'd broke
With violence away, and turning short
(When o'er the hippodrome, with winged speed,
They had completed now the seventh career),
Dash'd their wild foreheads 'gainst the Libyan car.
From this one luckless chance, a train of ills
Succeeding, rudely on each other fell
Horses and charioteers, and soon was fill'd
With wrecks of shatter'd cars the Phocian plain.
Erect Orestes, and erect his car,
Thro' all the number'd courses now had stood;
But luckless in the last, as round the goal
The wheeling courser turned, the hither rein
Imprudent he relax'd, and on the stone
The shatter'd axle dashing, from the wheel
Fell headlong, hamper'd in the tangling reins.
The frighted mares flew diverse o'er the course.
The throng'd assembly, when they saw their chief
Hurl'd from his chariot, with compassion moved,
His youth deplored, deplored him glorious late
For mighty deeds, now doom'd to mighty woes:
Now dragg'd along the dust, his feet in air;

Till, hasting to his aid, and scarce at length
The frantic mares restraining, from the reins
The charioteers releas'd him, and convey'd,
With wounds and gore disfigur'd, to his friends.

On the last day of the festival, the conquerors, being summoned by proclamation to the tribunal within the sacred grove, received the honour of public coronation, a ceremony preceded by pompous sacrifices. Encircled with the olive-wreath,* gathered from the sacred tree behind the temple of Jupiter, the victors, dressed in rich habits, bearing palm-branches in their hands and almost intoxicated with joy, proceeded in grand procession to the theatre, marching to the sound of flutes, and surrounded by an immense multitude who made the air ring with their acclamations. The winners in the horse and chariot-races formed a part of the pomp—their stately coursers bedecked with flowers, seeming as they paced proudly along, to be conscious participators of the triumph. When they reached the theatre, the choruses saluted them with the ancient hymn, composed by the poet Archilochus, to exalt the glory of the victors, the surrounding multitude joining their voices to those of the musicians. This being concluded, the trumpet sounded, the herald proclaimed the name and country of the victor, as well as the nature of his prize, the acclamations of the people within and without the building were redoubled, and flowers and garlands were showered from all sides upon the happy conqueror, who at this moment was thought to have attained the loftiest pinnacle of human glory and felicity. Diagoras of Rhodes, himself an Olympic victor, brought two of his sons to the games, who, on receiving the crown they had won, placed it on the head of their father, lifted him on their shoulders and bore him in triumph along the stadium. The spectators threw flowers upon him, exclaiming, "Die, Diagoras! for thou hast nothing more to wish,"—a complimentary exclamation which was unfortunately fulfilled; for the old man, overcome by his happiness, expired in sight of the assembly, and in the arms of his children, who bathed him with their tears.

* This trifling reward was supposed to be in memory of the labours of Hercules, which were accomplished for the public good, and for which the hero claimed no other distinction than the consciousness of having been the friend of mankind.

The last duty performed by the conquerors at Olympia was sacrificing to the twelve gods, which was sometimes done upon so magnificent a scale as to entertain the whole multitude who came to witness the solemnity. Their names were then enrolled in the archives of the Eleans, and they were sumptuously feasted in the banqueting-hall of the prytaneum. On the following days they themselves gave entertainments, the pleasure of which was heightened by music and dancing; or they were banqueted by their friends, who, as we learn from the following story in Plutarch, vied with one another for that honour, and thought no expense too great for the occasion. Phocus, having obtained a victory in the Panathenean games, and being invited by several of his friends to accept of an entertainment, at length pitched upon one to whom he thought that preference was due. But when Phocion, his father, came to the feast, and saw, among other extravagances, large vessels filled with wine and spices set before the guests when they came in to wash their feet, he said to his son, "Phocus! why do you not make your friend desist from dishonouring your victory."

At these festivities, whether public or private, were frequently sung by a chorus, accompanied with instrumental music, such odes as were composed in honour of the conqueror; but it was not the good fortune of every victor to have a poet for his friend, or to be able to pay the price of an ode, which was sometimes considerable, as we learn from the scholiast upon Pindar. The friends of one Pytheas, a conqueror in the Nemean games, came to Pindar to bespeak an ode, for which he demanded so large a sum that they declined his offer, saying "they could erect a statue of brass for less money." Some time after, having changed their opinion, they returned and paid the price required by Pindar, who, in allusion to this transaction, begins his ode with setting forth "that he was no statuary, no maker of images that could not stir from their pedestals, and consequently were to be seen only by those who would give themselves the trouble to go to the place where they were erected; but he could make a poem which should fly over the whole earth, and publish in every place that Pytheas had gained the crown in the Nemean games."*

* West's Pindar, vol. iii. p. 185.

Already loaded with honours at the scene of action, the victors returned to their own country with all the pageantry of triumph, preceded and followed by a numerous train, and sometimes entered their native city through a breach made in the walls, to denote that the place which could produce such strong and valiant men had little need of stone bulwarks. "In certain places, the victors had a competent subsistence furnished to them from the public treasury; in others they were exempt from all taxes; at Lacedæmon, where every distinction was of a warlike nature, they had the honour to combat near the king; almost every where they had precedency at the local games; and the title of Olympic victor added to their names ensured them an attentive respect, which constituted the happiness of their future lives."*

To perpetuate their glory after death, the conquerors themselves, their friends, or their country, generally set up their statues in the sacred grove of the Olympian Jupiter, which contained an almost incredible number of these figures. A long list of the most remarkable may be found in the sixth book of Pausanias. The statue of Ladas, an eminent racer, was so animated, not only in point of attitude, but in the lively expression of assured victory in the countenance, that "it is going this moment," says an epigram in the Anthology, "to leap from the pedestal and seize the crown."

To form a correct notion of the appearance of Olympia and its neighbourhood at the period of the games, it must be recollected that the whole open country, and more especially the banks of the Alpheus, bore the semblance of a vast encampment, from the great number of tents set up to accommodate the visiters; and that as business and traffic were combined with pleasure in this national festival, the great fair, with its dealers, showmen, mountebanks, and exhibiters of all sorts, occupied every moment not engrossed by the games. River and sea were covered with innumerable vessels; the shore with carriages and horses; spectators were thronging from all quarters of the earth, and in every possible variety of costume, some conducting victims for the Olympian Jupiter, some deputed to publish edicts.

* Anacharsis, cap. 38.

others coming to display their vanity and ostentation, or to distinguish themselves by their superior talents and knowledge. Here sculptors, painters, or artists exhibited specimens of their skill—there rhapsodists were to be seen reciting fragments of Homer and Hesiod; while the peristyles of the temples and all the most conspicuous places in the porticoes, walks, and groves were crowded with sophists, philosophers, poets, orators, and historians, arguing with one another, reciting their productions, and pronouncing eulogies on the Olympic games, on their respective countries, or on distinguished individuals whose favour they wished to conciliate.

In the midst of the various pursuits of this amazing congress of people, all animated by feelings of interest or of pleasure, they would suddenly suspend their avocations and amusements to participate in some pompous ceremony of that religion which, uniting them all in a common bond of alliance, sanctified and exalted their diversions, by imparting to them a character of duty and devotion. It is not sufficient to picture to ourselves the scenery, the climate, and all the varied magnificence of the spectacle we have been attempting to describe; we must imagine the moral, religious, and patriotic feelings of the assemblage, and the enthusiasm that such a union would generate, before we can form any conception of the Olympic games.

Among the benefactors of this festival, at an advanced stage of its existence, was Herod, afterward King of Judea. Seeing on his way to Rome the games neglected, or dwindling into insignificance, from the poverty of the Eleans, he displayed vast munificence as president, and provided an ample revenue for their future support and dignity. That they should derive such assistance from a Jew, to the nature and ordinances of whose religion they were so repugnant, seems a strange and anomalous circumstance. But though this and subsequent instances of equally powerful patronage might for a time protract their lingering existence, nothing could finally prevent the extinction of these celebrated games. The political decadence and impoverishment of Greece, the devastation of that country and of all Europe by the barbarians, but, above all, the extending influence of Christianity, whose votaries proclaimed open war not only against the deities but the institutions of the

pagans, at length accomplished the downfall of the Olympic festival.

So mutable are human affairs, so short is the comparative duration of the mightiest dynasties and empires, that the Olympic games, by the mere fact of their having continued in unbroken quinquennial celebration for a thousand years from the period of their revival, command a sort of reverence, and excite a feeling of involuntary sadness at the thought of their discontinuance and oblivion. Lofty and ennobling, and pleasant from the classical reminiscences they awaken, are all the associations connected with them. Kings and powerful states were often competitors at these illustrious sports, to the periodical recurrence of which the whole civilized world looked forward with an intensity of expectation that absorbed every other thought and pursuit. Public and private business was forgotten, the fiercest wars were suspended, a universal truce was proclaimed by sea and land, that all mankind might travel in safety to Olympia, and regard nothing but the paramount, the supreme object of attention—the festival. And all this has passed away like a dream which, however glorious and magnificent while it lasted, leaves not a shadow behind! That institution which had endured for so many ages, and formed the delight of such numerous generations of mankind, is now only an empty remembrance, a subject for the antiquary and the historian. Olympia is no more: its solid temples, the colossal statue of Jupiter, the sacred grove with its myriad of statues, altars, trophies, columns, monuments of gods, kings, and heroes, in brass, marble, and iron, have crumbled into dust, and become so effectually mingled with the earth, that even the site which they embellished can be no longer recognised. Nay, the very deities themselves in whose honour these games were instituted, and who had received the homage of the Pagan world since the infancy of time, have fallen into utter oblivion, or are only remembered that they may be converted into a by-word and a laughing stock.

If there be something humiliating to human reason in the thought that it may be devoted, through such a long succession of centuries, to an imaginary heaven and an evanescent pageant of earth, it is at least consolatory to reflect that the same human reason, victorious over time, and death,

and destruction, possesses the power to embalm its own corruptions and delusions, and erect them into a beacon of imperishable reminiscences for the guidance and instruction of the latest posterity. The Olympic games, with their emblazoned glories and massive monuments, have passed away like a sun-illumined vapour, which is exhaled into the air, and leaves no trace to tell us where it hovered; but the odes of Pindar, in which he has recorded the names and exploits of the victors, are still as fresh and perfect as when they were first written. The passing stream of ages does but petrify and strengthen them against the waves of coming centuries, and they will doubtless endure till the tide of time itself shall be lost in the ocean of eternity. This is the last, indeed the only trophy that the Olympic games have left behind them, and it is one of which all mankind may be justly proud, for it affords an additional assurance, if such were necessary, that the intellectual soul is a divinity which shall survive its perishable shrine, and enjoy in another world the immortality which it can confer in this.

That the unclassical reader may form some idea of the mode in which this illustrious poet celebrated the victors, we subjoin the shortest, though by no means the best, of his odes, as an appropriate termination to this brief account of the Olympic games. It must be recollected that these poems were recited or sung by a chorus, to the accompaniment of musical instruments, dancing, and action. The first stanza, called strophe, was sung while they danced round the altars of the gods; in the second, called antistrophe, the dance was inverted. The lesser stanza was named the epode, in which they sang standing still.

THE TWELFTH OLYMPIC ODE.

Inscribed to Ergoteles, the son of Philanor of Himera, who, in the seventy-seventh Olympiad (472 years B. C.), gained the prize in the foot-race called Dolichos, or the long course.

STROPHE.

Daughter of Eleutherian Jove,
To thee my supplication I prefer!
For potent Himera my suit I move;
Protectress Fortune, hear!
Thy deity along the pathless main
In her wild course the rapid vessel guides,
Rules the fierce conflict on the embattled plain,
And in deliberating states presides.

Toss'd by thy uncertain gale,
On the seas of error sail
Human hopes, now mounting high,
On the swelling surge of joy;
Now, with unaffected wo,
Sinking to the depths below.

ANTISTROPHE.

For such presage of things to come,
None yet on mortals have the gods bestow'd;
Nor of futurity's impervious gloom
Can wisdom pierce the cloud.
Oft our most sanguine views th' event deceives,
And veils in sudden grief the smiling ray:
Oft, when with wo the mournful bosom heaves,
Caught in a storm of anguish and dismay,
Pass some fleeting moments by—
All at once the tempests fly,
Instant shifts the clouded scene,
Heav'n renews its smiles serene,
And on joy's untroubled tides
Smooth to port the vessel glides.

EPODE.

Son of Philanor, in the secret shade,
Thus had thy speed, unknown to fame, decay'd;
Thus, like the crested bird of Mars, at home,
Engaged in foul domestic jars,
And wasted with intestine wars,
Inglorious hadst thou spent thy vig'rous bloom;
Had not sedition's civil broils
Expell'd thee from thy native Crete,
And driv'n thee with more glorious toils
Th' Olympic crown in Pisa's plain to meet.
With olive now, with Pythian laurels grac'd,
And the dark chaplets of the Isthmian pine,
In Himera's adopted city plac'd,
To all, Ergoteles, thy honours shine,
And raise her lustre by imparting thine.

CHAPTER VII.

Games of the Ancient Romans.

"Sacra recognosces Annalibus eruta priscis;
Et quo sit merito quæque notata die.
Invenies illic et festa domestica vobis,
Sæpe tibi pater est, sæpe legendus avus."
Ovid. Fast. lib. i. v. 7.

During the republic it was the practice of the Roman magistrates and rulers to court the suffrages of the citizens by the frequent exhibition of shows; it was the interest of the emperors to pacify and keep in subjection, by the same means, a people avowedly desiring nothing but bread and the public spectacles. The wealth of a conquered world enabled the imperial despots to gratify this propensity on the most magnificent scale; and their subjects, therefore, had probably in exchange for their loss of liberty a greater share of festivals, exhibitions, and holydays than any nation that ever existed. Truly they had sold their birthright for a mess of pottage. They wanted, indeed, the regular Sabbath of the Hebrews, but that deficiency had been supplied even from the times of Numa, by the division of their year, as noted upon the calendar, into days termed *fasti* and *nefasti*, in which the destination of each, either to labour or to the performance of religious sacrifices and solemnities, was permanently appointed. Additions to this list were constantly made by the pontiffs, in whose custody was deposited the sacred calendar, and who derived an important authority from the power thus vested in them; since by declaring a day to be lucky or unlucky they became, in some sort, the directors of public affairs and arbiters of the Roman destiny. Such was the superstition of the people, and so strictly was the observance of these pontifical decrees enjoined, that, besides a considerable fine, an expiatory sacrifice was imposed upon those who even through inattention had worked upon a holyday. To do so designedly and contumaciously was an irremissible offence.

It is worthy of remark, as illustrating the general nature of human beings in a social and civilized state, that so far from their evincing any tendency to idleness and inactivity, their inclinations, under the influence of covetousness, ambition, or the more laudable impulses of inherent industry, dispose them to such unremitting exertions, that all legislators and founders of religion have been forced to establish regular holydays, and to compel their observance, not only by the sanctions of devotion, but by visiting their infraction with severe pains and penalties. To adjust the fitting balance between the days of labour and repose is no easy matter, since it must depend not only on the nature and extent of the toil to which the people are habitually subjected, but on climate, degrees of civilization, and other collateral circumstances; so that the regulations fit for one country may be very improper for another. From the books that remain to us of Ovid's Fasti, as well as from other sources, we shall have no difficulty in deciding that the holydays prescribed in the Roman calendar were by far too numerous, and must have been detrimental to the best interests of the state. Their own religion was by no means deficient in festivals: in adopting the deities of the conquered nations they imported a new series of holydays. Reverence for their ancestors prompted them to observe many private commemorations, in which all pursuits of business were suspended: superstition prevented them from engaging in any undertaking on those days which, being marked black in the calendar, were deemed unlucky; in time of war a twelvemonth rarely elapsed without a public triumph, which was always a period of public idleness; and thus a considerable portion of every year was consumed in religious ceremonies, or general and domestic festivals—a suspension of the people's labours which was probably of little advantage to their morals, and must have been unquestionably injurious to their interests.

At a very early period we find the games of the Romans regulated with great order and method. Under the republic the consuls and pretors presided over the Circensian, Apollinarian, and secular games; the plebeian ediles had the direction of the plebeian games; the curule ediles, or the pretor, superintended the festivals dedicated to Jupiter, Ceres, Apollo, Cybele, and the other chief gods. These

latter celebrations, which continued during three days, were originally termed Ludi Magni; but upon the term being extended to four days by a decree of the senate, they took the name of Ludi Maximi. Games were instituted by the Romans, not only in honour of the celestial deities of all nations, but even to propitiate those who presided over the infernal regions; while the feralia was a festival established in honour of deceased mortals. Thus were heaven, Tartarus, and the grave, all laid under contribution for holydays by a religion which may be literally termed jovial, whether in the ancient or modern acceptation of that word. The feralia continued for eleven days, during which time presents were carried to the graves of the dead, whose *manes*, it was universally believed, came and hovered over their tombs, and feasted upon the provisions which had been placed there by the hand of piety and affection. It was also believed that during this period they enjoyed rest and liberty, and a suspension from their punishment in the infernal regions.

The scenic games, adopted from those of Greece, consisted of tragedies, comedies, and satires, represented at the theatre in honour of Bacchus, Venus, and Apollo. To render these exhibitions more attractive to the common people, they were accompanied by rope-dancing, tumbling, and similar performances. Afterward were introduced the pantomimes and buffoons, to which the Romans, like the degenerate Greeks, became so passionately attached, when the public taste and manners had become equally corrupt, that they superseded the more regular drama. There was no fixed time for these exhibitions, any more than for those amphitheatrical shows which were given by the consuls and emperors to acquire popularity, and which consisted in the combats of men and animals. So numerous, however, were the games of stated occurrence, that we can do no more than briefly recapitulate the names of the most celebrated.

The Actian games, consecrated to Apollo in commemoration of the victory of Augustus over Mark Antony at Actium, were held every third or fifth year with great pomp in the Roman stadium, and consisted of gymnastic sports, musical competitions, and horse-racing. In the reign of Tiberius were established the Ludi Augustales, in honour

of Augustus; the first representation of which was disturbed by the breaking out of the quarrel between the comedians and the buffoons, where rival factions so often subsequently embroiled the theatrical representations. Livia established in honour of the same emperor the Palatine games, to which the Romans were perhaps more indebted than to any other, since their celebration afforded an opportunity for the destruction of the monster Caligula. The Certamina Neronia were literary competitions established by the tyrant from whom they were named, who affected to be a patron as well as an adept in all the liberal arts. Among other prizes there was one for music, by which we are to understand poetry, since we are expressly told by Suetonius that Nero himself won the crown of poetry and eloquence, none of his antagonists, probably, choosing to surpass so formidable an antagonist. Games upon various models were also founded in commemoration of Commodus, Adrian, Antoninus, and many other illustrious and infamous individuals; while all the leading and many of the subordinate deities in the mythological army of the Pagans were honoured at stated periods by festivals and sacrifices, so that one almost wonders how the people could snatch sufficient time from the great business of pleasure and the public shows, to attend to the diurnal cares and pursuits of life.

Besides these numerous festivities—for, though many of them professed to be religious ceremonies, they were essentially merrimakings and revels—there were the secular games, revived by Augustus, and celebrated only once in a hundred years. Every thing appertaining to these games was calculated to impress the superstitious mind with deep and solemn reverence. From the long interval between the celebrations none could have seen them before, none could ever hope to behold them again. Slaves and strangers were excluded from any participation in this great national festival; the mystic sacrifices to Pluto and Proserpine, to the Fates and to the Earth were performed at night on the banks of the Tiber; the Campus Martius, which was illuminated with innumerable lamps and torches, resounded with music and dancing, and the temples with the choral hymns of youths and virgins, imploring the gods to preserve the virtue,

the felicity, and the empire of the Roman people.* While these supplications were tendered, the statues of the deities were placed on cushions, where they were served with the most exquisite dainties. During the three days of the festival three different pieces of music were performed, the scene being changed as well as the form of the entertainment. On the first, the people assembled in the Campus Martius; on the second, in the Capitol; the third, upon Mount Palatine. A full and beautiful description of these games is furnished by the Carmen Sæculare of Horace, who was appointed the laureate to celebrate their revival by Augustus, and whose ode, like those of Pindar upon the Olympic games, is all that now remains to us of the great and gorgeous spectacle that it commemorates.

When the Romans became masters of the world they accorded the right of stated public shows to such cities as required it; the names of which places are preserved in the Arundel marbles and other ancient inscriptions. Games of all sorts—floral, funeral, Compitalian, and many others, as well as the numerous festivals in honour of deities, heroes, and men, were held in most of the provincial towns as well as in Rome itself; but as these closely resembled the religious ceremonies of the Greeks, from whom indeed they were chiefly borrowed, and as none of them equalled in celebrity or magnificence the Olympic games, of which we have already given a description, we shall only now notice the amphitheatrical combats, which were exclusively practised by the Romans.

As superstition and cruelty seem to be inseparable, we find the ignorance of early Paganism, and perhaps of all religions, except the Jewish and Christian, stained with the blood of human sacrifices, more especially in the funeral rites. Allusion has been made to the twelve noble Trojans thus slaughtered by Achilles, as recorded in Homer; in Virgil also, the pious Eneas sends his prisoners to Evander that they may be immolated upon the funeral pile of his son Pallas. The Greeks, however, becoming more humanized as civilization advanced, not only discarded these barbarous practices, but even in their public games gradually suffered

*When the popish jubilees, the copy of the secular games, were invented by Boniface VIII., the crafty pope pretended that he only revived an ancient institution.—See *Gibbon's Decline and Fall*, vol. i. chap. 7.

all such as were of a cruel and perilous nature to fall into desuetude; thus exemplifying the dictum of Ovid, that the cultivation of the polite arts "emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros." The Spartans, indeed, who retained the ferocious sport of the cæstus, after it had been interdicted by the other states, seem to have been in all ages the same heroical savages; nor does it appear that time and comparative civilization ever extirpated, or even softened the blood-thirsty disposition and utter disregard of human life that were inherent in the Roman character. At a very early period of their annals we find them, in compliance with a Sibylline prediction, "that Gauls and Greeks should possess the city," burying alive within the walls of Rome four persons, a man and a woman of each nation, in order that thus the prophecy might be fulfilled.* Similar or greater atrocities are of frequent occurrence in the history of those sanguinary tormentors and butchers of the world, who appear to have been never happy unless they were shedding human blood in war, or slaughtering whole herds of animals as sacrifices to their gore-loving gods. So invincible was this propensity, that when there was no foreign enemy on whom to wreak their brutal ferocity, they could even delight in civil war, and in witnessing the destruction of their fellow-citizens, of which a horrible example was afforded towards the commencement of the empire. The soldiers of Vespasian and those of Vitellius fought a murderous battle in the Campus Martius, and the people who beheld the spectacle, alternately applauding the success of each party, gave themselves up to the extravagance of a barbarous joy.†

That such a nation should be fierce and ruthless, even in their sports, was naturally to be expected; to the Romans accordingly belongs the disgrace, if not of inventing, at least of adopting, enlarging, and continuing, the gladiatorial and animal combats of the amphitheatre. A superstitious conceit that the souls of deceased warriors delighted in human sacrifices, as if they were slain to satisfy their revenge, originated and gave a sort of religious sanction to this cruel custom, which often proved fatal to prisoners of war. But as the inhumanity of such massacres became recognised, combats of captives and slaves were substituted

* Plutarch, in vit. Marcell. † Tacitus, Hist. lib. iii. cap. 83.

at the funeral games, a practice which led the way to the subsequent introduction of regular gladiators, exhibited, not to appease the dead, but to amuse the living. Whether or not the Romans derived these cruel games from the ancient Etrurians, as some have maintained, they eagerly seized every opportunity for their exhibition, even upon occasions when such hideous spectacles would have been peculiarly repugnant to the feelings of any other people upon earth. "The gladiatory shows," says an old historian,* "were exhibited by the Romans, not only at their public meetings, and on their theatres, but they used them at their feasts also."—The first public spectacle of the sort has been assigned to the Varronian year, 490, when the two Bruti caused three couples of gladiators to combat together in the ox-market, in honour of their deceased father; from which period the multitude became so passionately attached to the sport, that the magistrates, and others who were desirous of advancement in the state, began to have them celebrated at their own charge, often promising them beforehand as donatives for their election. In the earliest times these combats generally took place before the sepulchres; latterly they were celebrated in the squares or open places of the cities, in the surrounding porticoes of which the intercolumniations were purposely made larger, that the view of the spectators might be the less obstructed. In the time of Polybius, towards the sixth age of Rome, the gladiatory employment was reduced to a regular art, admitting great variety of arms and combatants, as well as different modes of engaging.

Combats of wild beasts were first exhibited in the 568th year of Rome, when Marcus Fulvius treated the people with a hunting of lions and panthers: but as luxury and riches increased, and the conquest of Africa and the East facilitated the supply of exotic animals, it soon became a contest with the ediles and others who should evince the greatest magnificence in the Circensian games, and construct the most sumptuous amphitheatres for their display. Cæsar, however, surpassed all his predecessors in the funeral shows which he celebrated in memory of his father; for, not con-

* Nicholaus Damascenus. Others, however, maintain, that upon the latter occasions the weapons were guarded, and the fights simulated, not real.

tent with supplying the vases and all the apparatus of the theatre with silver, he caused the arena to be paved with silver plates; "so that," says Pliny, "wild beasts were for the first time seen walking and fighting upon this precious metal." This excessive expense on the part of Cæsar was only commensurate with his ambition. Preceding ediles had simply sought the consulate; Cæsar aspired to empire, and was resolved, therefore, to eclipse all his competitors. Pompey the Great, on dedicating his theatre, produced, besides a rhinoceros and other strange beasts from Ethiopia, 500 lions, 410 tigers, and a number of elephants, who were attacked by African men, the hunting being continued during five days. Cæsar, after the termination of the civil wars, divided his hunting-games into five days also; in the first of which the camelopard was shown; at last 500 men on foot, and 300 on horseback were made to fight, together with twenty elephants, and an equal number more with turrets on their backs, defended by sixty men. As to the number of gladiators, he surpassed every thing that had been seen before, having produced, when edile, as Plutarch tells us, no less than 320 couples of human combatants.

CHAPTER VIII.

Gladiatorial Games.

"—This is the bloodiest shame,
The wildest savagery, the vilest stroke
That ever wall-eyed wrath or staring rage
Presented to the tears of soft remorse."
Shakspeare.

We shall endeavour to give a succinct account of the professional gladiators, free from the elaborate display of erudition with which the subject has been too often encumbered. —At first their exhibition was limited to the funeral pomps of the consuls and chief magistrates of the republic; insensibly this privilege was extended to less distinguished individuals; private persons and even females stipulated for

such combats in their wills; the instruction of gladiators became a regular art; they were trained, formed, and exercised under proper teachers, and at last they were converted into a sort of trade, individuals becoming masters and proprietors of bands of gladiators, with whom they travelled about the country, exhibiting them for money in the provincial towns, and at the local games. For the sake of diversity some fought in chariots, or on horseback, others contended with their eyes bandaged; some had no offensive weapons, being only provided with a buckler; others were armed from top to toe. Gladiators of one description were supplied with a sword, a poniard, and a cutlass; while a second sort had two swords, two poniards, and two cutlasses. Some only fought in the morning, others in the afternoon; each couple being distinguished by appropriate names, of which we shall give a list.

1. The gladiators called *Secutores* were armed with a sword, and a species of mace loaded with lead.

2. The *Thraces* carried a species of scimitar, like that used by the Thracians.

3. The *Myrmillones* were armed with a buckler, and a sort of scythe, and bore a fish upon the top of their helmets. The Romans had given them the nickname of Gauls.

4. The *Retiarii* carried a trident in one hand and a net in the other; they fought in a tunic and pursued the *Myrmillo*, crying out "I do not want you, Gaul, but your fish."—*Non te peto, Galle, sed piscem peto.*

5. The *Hoplomachi*, as their Greek name indicates, were armed *cap-à-pie*.

6. The *Provocatores*, adversaries of the *Hoplomachi*, were, like them, completely armed.

7. The *Dimachæri* fought with a poniard in each hand.

8. The *Essedarii* always combated in chariots.

9. The *Andabatæ* fought on horseback, their eyes being closed, either by a bandage or by a visor which fell down over the face.

10. The *Meridiani* were thus named because they entered the arena towards noon; they fought with a sword against others of the same class.

11. The *Bestiarii* were professed gladiators or bravoes, who combated with wild beasts, to display their courage and address, like the modern bull-fighters of Spain.

12. The *Fiscales*, *Cæsariani*, or *Postulati*, were gladiators kept at the expense of the public treasury, as their first title imports. They took the name of *Cæsariani* because they were reserved for those games of which the emperors were spectators; and of *Postulati* because, as they were the bravest and most skilful of all the combatants, they were the most frequently called for by the people.

The *Catervarii* were gladiators drawn from all the different classes to fight in troops, many against many.

The *Samnites*, so called because they were dressed in the manner of that nation, were generally employed at feasts and entertainments, to display their skill and agility in mock engagements, and did not use murderous weapons.

From this appalling list it will be seen that no circumstance was neglected that could add to the horror of the combats, and gratify the cold-blooded cruelty of the spectators by every possible refinement in barbarity. Not only was art exhausted, and every incentive applied to perfect the skill and animate the courage of the unhappy victims, so that they might die becomingly; but the utmost ingenuity was employed in varying and rendering more terrible the murderous weapons with which they were to butcher one another. It was not by chance that a Thracian gladiator was opposed to a *Secutor*, or that a *Retiarius* was armed in one way and the *Myrmillo* in another; they were purposely combined in a manner most likely to protract the fight, and make it more sanguinary. By varying the arms it was proposed to diversify the mode of their death; they were fed upon barley cakes and other fattening aliments, in order that the blood might flow slowly from their wounds, and that the spectators might enjoy as long as possible the sight of their dying agonies.

Let it not be imagined that these spectators were the refuse of the people; the most distinguished orders of the state delighted in these cruel amusements, even the Vestal virgins being placed with great ceremony in the front row of the amphitheatre. It is amusing to read the poetical description which Prudentius has drawn of that vestal modesty which, while it covered their face with blushes, found a secret delight in the hideous conflicts of the arena;—of those downcast looks that were greedy of wounds and death;—of those sensitive souls who fainted away at the

sight of blood and blows, yet always recovered when the knife was about to be plunged into the throat of the sufferer; —of the compassion of those timid virgins who themselves gave the fatal signal that decided the death of the blood-streaming gladiator:—

> ————Pectusque jacentis
> Virgo modesta jubet, converso pollice, rumpi,
> Ne lateat pars ulla animæ vitalibus imis,
> Altiùs impresso dum palpitat ense Secutor.

That some pleasure might be derived by a warlike people from contemplating the skill and courage of the combatants, especially where they could reward the display of those qualities by giving the parties their liberty, we can easily understand; but to cut off even this poor solitary excuse,—to furnish blinded men with weapons, and then set them on to butcher one another in the dark, was an act of ruthless atrocity that could only have originated in a brutal appetite for blood. Cicero approved of gladiatorial exhibitions, so long as none but criminals were the combatants. Pliny the younger was of opinion that such kind of shows were proper to inspire fortitude, and make men despise wounds and death, by showing that even the lowest rank of mankind were ambitious of victory and praise; but surely the spectacle of blind combatants could confirm nothing but the cowardice and inhumanity from which it sprang; nor can men be familiarized to the sight of violence and blood, without being tempted to imitate that which they see a whole people applaud.

The masters and teachers of the gladiators were termed *Lanistæ*, to whom were committed the prisoners, criminals, and guilty slaves, that they might be instructed in their horrible art, and fitted for public slaughter. Freemen, however, sometimes voluntarily hired themselves to the service of the arena, the master making them previously swear that they would fight even to death. Application being made to these *Lanistæ* when gladiatorial shows were desired, they furnished for a stated price the number of pairs, and of the different classes that might be wanted. Some of the leading persons of the state, and among others Julius Cæsar, kept gladiators of their own, as a part of their regular establishments. The Emperor Claudius wished to limit the

number of these cruel spectacles, but the popular appetite for blood had now been confirmed by long indulgence, and he was soon after obliged to annul his own ordinance.

Some time before the day of engagement, the president of the games announced by handbills, or occasionally by a picture of the intended engagement, exposed in some public place, the number and quality of the gladiators, as well as their names and the marks by which they were distinguished—for each assumed a particular badge, such as the feathers of the peacock, or some other bird. On the morning of the spectacle they began by fencing and skirmishing, as a sort of prelude, with wooden foils and staves, after which they armed themselves with real weapons of all sorts, and proceeded to action. The first blood drawn produced a cry of "He is wounded;" and if at the same time the wounded party lowered his arms, it was considered as an acknowledgment of his defeat. His life, however, depended on the spectators, or on the president of the games; but if at this moment the emperor happened to arrive, the gladiator was spared as an act of grace, sometimes unconditionally, sometimes with the understanding that if he should recover from his wounds, he was not to be exempted from future combats. In the ordinary course of things, it was the people who decided upon the life and death of the wounded combatant; if he had conducted himself with skill and courage, his pardon was almost always granted; but if he had betrayed any cowardice in the engagement, his death-warrant was generally pronounced. In the former case, the people displayed the hand with the thumb doubled under the fingers; in the latter they extended the hand with the thumb raised, and pointed towards the bleeding wretch, who so well understood the fatal nature of this signal, that he was accustomed as soon as he perceived it to present his throat to the adversary, in order to receive the mortal thrust.

Every gladiator who had served three years in the arena was entitled to his dismissal; a privilege sometimes granted to him by the people, upon any extraordinary display of valour and address, even although he had not served the stipulated period. The reward of a victorious gladiator was a palm, and a sum of money, sometimes of considerable amount. To obtain absolute freedom, they must have

been many times victors; though latterly it became common to grant them emancipation when they achieved their exemption from the service of the arena. Severe regulations, however, became necessary to protect them from the fraud and avarice of the ruffianly *Lanistæ*, or masters, who often made them fight again in other places, after they had earned their dismissal. They who had received their freedom wore, as an honorary testimony of their courage, a garland or crown of flowers, and entwined with woollen ribands, the ends of which hung down upon the shoulders. Strange as it may appear, these men had contracted such a passion for their murderous trade, that they returned voluntarily to the arena, and as amateur gladiators exposed themselves to all the perils from which they had just escaped. If they abandoned for ever the gladiatorial profession, they dedicated their arms to Hercules, their tutelary deity, by hanging them up at the gate of his temple.

Nero compelled a great number of equestrians and senators to fight in the arena, both against one another and with wild beasts. The Emperor Commodus exhibited in his own person the gladiatorial art, the rage for which finally became so ungovernable that not only did men of rank spontaneously mingle in the infamous combats of the arena, but even women so far forgot their sex and all regard to common decency as to fight with one another before the assembled populace of Rome. Let this vilifying effect of the gladiatorial shows be adduced as a signal refutation of every modern Pliny who would maintain that the public mind derives a proper hardihood and manly courage from an indulgence in cruel and barbarous sports. Ferocity is quite compatible with cowardice and servility—for these very Romans were the most abject of slaves.

After the establishment of Christianity, and the removal of the seat of empire to Byzantium, a greater amenity was introduced into the habits and manners of society; but it does not appear, although a crowd of writers have made the assertion, that Constantine abolished the gladiatorial shows. His ordinance dated at Berytus, in Phenicia, the first of October, 325, only directs that the condemned criminals, instead of being employed in the arena, should be sent to the mines. The Emperors Honorius and Arcadius tried to abolish these horrible games in the West, but they only

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

Fig. 4

finally terminated with the Roman empire itself, when it was extinguished by the invasion of Theodric, king of the Goths, about the year 493 of J. C.*

A singular and most curious modern discovery enables us to give the reader a more correct notion of the combats of the arena, both gladiatorial and animal, than could be furnished by any description however elaborate. Among the tombs, which are by far the most perfect of all the remains disinterred, of Pompeii was found one covered with bas-reliefs in stucco, presenting minute details of the amphitheatrical games and combats. At a small distance from this monument was found the marble tablet that had fallen from it, containing an inscription, which has been thus rendered: "To Aricius Scaurus, the son of Aulus, of the tribe Menenia, Justicial Duumvir, to whom the Decurions have granted the site of this monument, two thousand sestercest for his funeral, and an equestrian statue in the forum. Scaurus, the father, to his son."

Beneath the inscription, on the steps of the cippus, are still to be seen some fragments of bas-reliefs in stucco, of which M. Mazois, from whose splendid work we have taken the annexed engraving and its explanations, has selected such as serve best to illustrate the huntings and animal combats, or *Venationes* of the Romans. The first (*fig.* 1) shows a man exposed without defence between a lion and a panther; in the second (*fig.* 2) a wild boar is rushing upon a naked man, already overthrown. It has been conjectured that these defenceless *Bestiarii*, trusting to their agility for their escape, were employed purposely to irritate the wild beasts, and, as soon as they were pursued, saved themselves in some place of retreat, as is still practised in the continental bull-fights. The figures in fact exhibit no sign of alarm, even the man opposed to the wild boar appearing to have taken an attitude that would enable him to start up instantly, when the danger became imminent. In the same bas-relief is a wolf pierced by a dart,

* See the Dictionnaire Classique of M. Sabbathier, art. *Gladiateur*, from which parts of this chapter have been translated.

† About 16*l.*; but it has been conjectured that there might have been another cipher on the missing piece, which would make the amount about 94*l.*, a sum still too moderate to pay for the funeral games, although it might suffice for the pyre, the vases, and the hire of the usual attendants.

PAINTINGS FROM TOMBS AT POMPEII.

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which he gnaws as he runs. Beyond him is a roebuck, attacked by other wolves or dogs, the traces of the rope by which it had been tied being still distinguishable. The third figure is extremely curious, as showing the way in which the young *Bestiarius* was familiarized to the sight and the roaring of the wild beasts, as well as the manner in which they were taught to encounter them. By means of a collar and rope the panther is fastened to the girth that cinctures an enormous bull, an ingenious contrivance, which, giving a partial liberty to the animal, renders the combat much more equal and interesting than if it were tied to any fixed point. Behind the bull is another *Bestiarius*, who seems to be goading it on, that the panther may have a greater length of tether for engaging its assailant. In the fourth figure a man attacks a bear with a sword in one hand and a veil in the other, from which latter circumstance (the veil being a recent introduction), we are enabled with some plausibility to fix the epoch of the games given at the funeral of Scaurus to the latter years of the reign of Claudius, or the beginning of that of Nero, when the passion for these exhibitions was at its height.

The bas-reliefs of the base, also executed in stucco, are divided into two zones, the figures being attached to the plaster as is still practised, by pins of bronze or iron; but the latter, which are unfortunately the most numerous, having become oxidated, have accelerated the decomposition of that which they were intended to preserve. Previously to the disaster that destroyed Pompeii, in the year 79, this tomb seems to have already suffered, since under most of the actual figures we find others of an infinitely better and more graceful workmanship, and sometimes armed in a different manner. From the following inscription on one of the walls of Pompeii, we learn that the same troop of gladiators, belonging to Numerius Festus Ampliatus, which fought at the funeral of Scaurus, exhibited a second time in the amphitheatre, the 16th of the calendar of June.

N. FESTI. AMPLIATI.
FAMILIA. GLADIATORIA. PUGNA. ITERUM
PUGNA. XVI. IVN. VENAT. VELA.

"The troop of gladiators of Numerius Festus Ampliatus

will fight, for the second time, 16th June. Combat, chases, awnings" (in the amphitheatre).

The names of the combatants, the number of their victories, and even their condemnation, are written above the figures, as well as the name of the proprietor of the troop (*see the upper part of the plate*). In the first zone (*fig.* 5) we distinguish eight couples of combatants. The first pair, beginning at the left, presents two equestrian gladiators. The first is named *Bebrix*, a barbarous word, which seems to announce a foreign origin; he has already conquered in several other engagements; the numerals appear to represent XII., but they are partly obliterated. His adversary bears the name of *Nobilior*, and reckons eleven victories. Each is armed with a light lance, a round shield elegantly ornamented, and a bronze helmet with a visor, entirely covering the face, like those of our ancient knights. The leg and thigh are naked. *Bebrix* has shoes, such as are now worn: *Nobilior* has a species of half-boot tied round the leg. The former has made a thrust with his lance, which the latter has parried, and is charging his antagonist.

The next group consists of two gladiators whose names are effaced. In the first light-armed figure we recognise one of the *Velites*, and in the other a *Samnite*. The former, sixteen times victor in former games, has at length encountered a more fortunate or more skilful combatant than himself. Wounded in the breast, he has lowered his buckler in confession of his defeat, and raised his finger towards the people, for it was thus that the gladiators implored mercy. Behind him the Samnite awaits the answer of the spectators, ready to spare or to despatch him according to their orders.

In the third pair we behold the combat of a *Thracian* and a *Myrmillo*. The swords have mostly disappeared, or were never sculptured by the artist, otherwise the former would have been represented with a crooked scimitar. We do not find on the helmet of the *Myrmillo* the fish with which they were accustomed to adorn their crest; but he is characterized by his Gaulish arms, whence the whole class acquired their nickname, and we may perceive at his foot the Gaulish half-pike, which he has thrown away at the moment of his defeat. Although conqueror upon fifteen other occasions,

he is at length defeated, and the *Thracian*, his adversary, gains a thirty-fifth victory. The *Myrmillo*, wounded in the breast, implores the clemency of the people; but the letter *theta*, placed at the end of the inscription above him, announces that he was put to death.*

The four following persons, consisting of two *Secutores* and two *Retiarii*, offer a still more cruel spectacle. *Nepimus*, a *Retiarius*, five times victorious, has fought with a *Secutor*, whose name is effaced; but who was no unworthy adversary, since he had triumphed six times in different engagements. On the present occasion he has been less fortunate. *Nepimus* has struck him on the leg, the thigh, the left arm, and the right side, from all of which the blood flows: in vain has he implored mercy; the spectators have condemned him to death! But as the trident is not a proper weapon for inflicting a sure and speedy death, it is the *Secutor Hippolytus* who renders to his comrade this last service. The wretched victim bends his knee, and throws himself upon the fatal sword, while *Nepimus*, his conqueror, spurns him with his foot and hand, as if he were ferociously insulting him in his last moments. In the distance is seen the *Retiarius* who is to fight against *Hippolytus*. The armour of the *Secutores* was light, for nothing but their agility could afford them a chance of escape and victory. On the head of the *Retiarii* we perceive no other defence than a bandage: the nets with which they sought to entangle their adversaries are not apparent. This portion of the bas-relief is terminated by the combat of a *Velite* and a *Samnite*. The latter implores the spectators to grant him his dismissal, which apparently is refused; his adversary looks towards the steps of the amphitheatre; he has seen the fatal signal, and seems preparing to strike.

Figure 6 forms part of the upper zone, from which, however, it is separated by the pilasters of the gate. In the first combat a *Samnite* has been conquered by a *Myrmillo*, who wishes to immolate his antagonist without waiting the decision of the people, to whom the latter has appealed; but the *Lanista* or master of the gladiators restrains his fury. The next pair offers a similar combat, in which the *Myr-*

* M. Millin, in describing this tomb, proves from several authorities that the θ was thus placed, because it was the initial of the word θανών —dying.

millo, having received his death-wound, is falling stiffened to the ground.

A less inhuman, but not less sanguinary, spectacle forms the subject of the lower zone (*fig.* 7). In the upper portion we see a dog chasing hares, a timid animal that would seem scarcely worthy the honour of the circus; but the cruelty of the Romans was ingenious, and by some of Martial's epigrams (lib. i. *epig.* 15, 23, 53, 71) we know that in certain games hares and lions were turned into the arena at the same time. Further on a wounded stag is pursued by dogs. In the lower part a wild boar is seized by a formidable dog, who has already torn its flank. In the middle of the composition a *Bestiarius* overthrows a bear by a thrust of his lance. The second *Bestiarius* has driven his enormous spear entirely through a bull, who, though he still flies, turns his head as if he would renew the attack upon his adversary. The latter testifies the greatest surprise at the inefficacy of this terrible wound, and at finding himself disarmed, and in the power of the infuriated animal.

In dismissing this subject we may remark, in proof of the inordinate extent to which the appetite for human blood was finally carried by the Romans, that, according to Josephus, seven hundred Jewish prisoners of war were at one time set to fight in the arena. Among other imperial freaks, "Caligula took sometimes delight, when the sun was most intensely hot, to order the covering of the amphitheatre to be drawn back, and removed of a sudden; prohibiting any one whomsoever from going away from his place."* Nor did the spectators always escape so cheaply, for, upon one occasion, there being no more condemned criminals, he ordered several lookers-on of the lower rank to be seized and thrown to the wild beasts. Of the invincible attachment of the Romans to these games we may form some opinion from the following circumstance, related by Theodoret in his Ecclesiastical History: "A certain person called Telemachus, by profession a monk, who came from the East, happened on some solemn day to go into the amphitheatre, where he used his utmost endeavours to hinder the combatants from fighting. This unexpected incident so enraged the spectators, that without further ado

* Maffei on Amphitheatres.

they rushed upon him, and tore him to pieces; for which, says our author (and Sozomen also relates the same), the Romans were for the first time forbidden such games."* It appears to have been only a temporary interdiction, and to have occurred in the reign of Constantine. There is no mention of games of any sort after the sixth century, at which time the great amphitheatre of Titus was abandoned to the spoliations of man, and the dilapidation of time and the elements. This enormous pile, which from its vast proportions and marvellous height well merited the name of the Colosseum,† contained, according to Publius Victor, eighty-seven thousand places; it was small, however, compared with the prodigious extent of the Circus Maximus of Cæsar, the great length of which, stretching out to three-eighths of a mile, enabled it, says Pliny, to accommodate two hundred and forty thousand spectators. As illustrating the combined superstition and rudeness of the Roman character, we may mention, before we quit the subject of their amphitheatres, that while the lowest and best seats were reserved for the Vestal virgins, and the ladies of the imperial family, all other females were obliged to toil up to the top of the theatre, where they were not only surrounded by the plebeians and the rabble, but could hear nothing and see little of what was going forward in the arena below.

* Maffei on Amphitheatres, cap. 6.

† That the amphitheatre took its title from its magnitude, and not from the Colossus of Nero in its vicinity, is satisfactorily established by Maffei, cap. 4.

CHAPTER IX.

Modern Festivals, Games, and Amusements.—Historical Retrospect.

"And oft, conducted by historic truth,
We tread the long extent of backward time."
Thomson.

Under this head we shall chiefly confine ourselves to the festivals, games, and pastimes of our own island; not only as being better adapted to a volume of this Library, but because there are few continental sports of which we do not find some professed imitation or casual resemblance among ourselves.

Human nature is the same in all parts of the earth: the recreations of a rude and illiterate nation must be inevitably limited to sensual and external gratifications; however, therefore, they may be modified by climate and manners, they must in their main qualities, at least in the earlier stages of civilization, present a considerable degree of similarity. Nothing, moreover, is so difficult to control as popular customs, which, when they have reference to the enjoyments of the lower orders, are considered as their peculiar, often their sole privilege, and are retained with a proportionate obstinacy. We have seen for how many centuries the Pagan games survived the deities in whose honour they were first instituted. More willing to surrender their antiquated religion than the amusements connected with it, the heathen people could only be won to Christianity by a compromise which enabled them to incorporate with the new faith many of the festivals and pastimes of Paganism. These took other names indeed; they were baptized afresh, and consecrated to saints and martyrs, instead of demigods and heroes; but the multitude cared little about the form and title, provided they got the essence, which, according to their estimation, consisted in the holyday and its festive or processional concomitants. Exactly the same thing occurred at the second great religious change—the Reforma-

tion, when we adopted many of the stated festivals and holydays, although we uncanonized the saints and martyrs in whom they originated. Of all religions, that part seems to endure the longest which is associated with the pleasures of the people; no mean argument for making cheerfulness and enjoyment constituents of our devotional observances, instead of seeking to dissever them. In a review of such festivals, sports, and holydays as still exist among us, it will be found that some are originally derived from the Pagans, others from the Papists: we are not aware of any that can be strictly termed modern.

What were the amusements and stated relaxations from labour enjoyed by the ancient inhabitants of Britain, we have no means of ascertaining; but we know that their religion, like that of the early Greeks and Romans, was a savage superstition, delighting in human sacrifices; and we may therefore conclude that their sports and games, whether emanating from it or not, were of an equally ferocious character. Deficiency in feasts and merrimakings, however, cannot be imputed to any of the old Celtic nations, though the convivial scene was not unfrequently disgraced by Lapithæan strife. It was at a feast that the two illustrious British princes, Cairbar and Oscar, quarrelled about their own bravery and that of their ancestors, and fell by mutual wounds, probably when under the influence of deep potations. Before the general introduction of agriculture, mead seems to have been the only strong liquor known to the inhabitants of our island; and it continued to be a favourite beverage even after others had been introduced. The mead-maker was the eleventh person in dignity in the court of the ancient princes of Wales, and took place of the physician. How much this liquor was esteemed by the British princes may be gathered from the following law of the principality: "There are three things in the court which must be communicated to the king before any other person; 1. Every sentence of the judge; 2. Every new song; and 3. Every cask of mead." The joys of song and the music of the harp were the accompaniments of the feast, the bards usually celebrating the brave actions of the guests, or the exploits of their ancestors.

Imitation of the Roman conquerors, and a partial adoption of their Paganism, doubtless introduced for a time

many of the classical pastimes and holydays, which were not entirely swept away when the Saxon conquest effected a total change in the laws and government of the country. Hunting and other robust exercises might have been the chief, but they were not the sole diversions of the conquerors, who had by this time become sufficiently advanced in civilization to derive pleasure from intellectual amusements. A northern hero, whose name was Kolson, boasts of nine accomplishments in which he was well skilled. "I know," says he, "how to play at chess; I can engrave Runic letters; I am expert at my book; I know how to handle the tools of the smith; I can traverse the snow on skates of wood; I excel in shooting with the bow; I use the oar with facility; I can sing to the harp; and I compose verses."* This might be termed a liberal education for the times in which he lived; but Kolson had made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, which may probably account, in great measure, for his literary qualifications. Learning does not by any means appear to have formed an indispensable part even of a nobleman's education, under the Saxon government. Alfred, it is well known, was twelve years of age before he acquired his letters.

In a turbulent and warlike age the qualities of the body will always be more highly valued than those of the mind; for as strength and courage are then the sole means of achieving fortune and distinction, or of preserving them when won, the opulent will naturally prefer, even in their relaxations, such robust exercises as either bear a direct semblance of war, or qualify them to endure its fatigues and hardships. Where *might* so often constituted *right*, every man was obliged to learn, as the most essential of all arts, that of defending himself and his possessions against the evil designs of his neighbour. Until peace was of frequent intervention, and law, becoming paramount, relieved individuals from this incessant duty of watch and ward, learning was considered as an unsoldierly if not an ignoble pursuit, and was willingly abandoned to the inmates of the cloister. Of inferior pastimes, however, the Saxons appear to have had their share. From their German ancestors they had inherited an immoderate attachment to

* Olaus, as quoted in Strutt's Sports and Pastimes, int. iii.

gaming—that only vice which seems to exercise an equal influence over the most barbarous and the most civilized nations, as if it were an inherent and ineradicable tendency of the human mind. After dice, chess and backgammon appear to have been the most favourite sedentary amusements of the Saxons and Danes, and to have occasionally occupied a large portion of the night. Bishop Ætheric, having obtained admission to Canute about midnight, upon some urgent business, found the king engaged with his courtiers at play, some at dice, and some at chess. The clergy, however, were prohibited from playing at games of chance by the ecclesiastical canons established in the reign of Edgar.

Christianity, upon its introduction into our island, not only brought with it the cheering Sabbath, the most precious boon that religion has ever bestowed upon man, but numerous holydays and festivals, fixed or fluctuating. Of these we are bound by the nature of our work to give some account, although we shall render it as succinct as possible, since the subject must be already familiar to the mass of our readers. The immoveable feasts of the church are those constantly celebrated on the same day of the year; the principal of which are Christmas-day, the Circumcision, Epiphany, Candlemas, Lady-day, All Saints, and All Souls, besides the days of the several apostles. Of the moveable feasts, which are not confined to a particular day, the principal is Easter, which gives law to all the rest, all of them following and keeping their stated distances from it; such as Palm Sunday, Good Friday, Ash Wednesday, Sexagesima, Ascension Day, Pentecost, and Trinity Sunday. Some of these feasts were instituted in the very earliest ages of Christianity. That of the Circumcision, however, is not more ancient than the seventh century. The Purification, the Annunciation, and the Assumption were first observed in the sixth; Ash Wednesday in the eleventh: the feast of the Trinity began to be kept in some of the German and Italian churches about the tenth or eleventh century; it was not, however, till the fourteenth and fifteenth that it was generally adopted. Towards the ninth, the feast of the Nativity was established; that of the Conception dates from the thirteenth, and was confirmed by the council of Basle in 1439. Pope Gregory IV., about

the year 840, assigned the feast of All Saints to the 1st of November; that of All Souls originated in the thirteenth century. To these must be added the vigils, or wakes, local feasts in remembrance of the dedication of particular churches. Towards the conclusion of the fourth century there began to be a prodigious increase in the number of feast-days, occasioned by the discovery of the remains of martyrs and of holy men, for whose commemoration they were established. Many of these were instituted on a Pagan model, and abused in indolence, voluptuousness, and criminal practices, if we judge them by modern notions of morality. Perhaps, however, they might be partly expedient to wean from Paganism a rude untutored people, who could neither have understood nor relished a purely spiritual and abstract religion, and to whose senses and enjoyments, therefore, it became necessary to appeal in the first instance, as the sole means of ultimately convincing their reason. Candlemas, for instance, at which feast the lighted tapers that had received the benediction were carried in procession, was instituted by Pope Gelasius, in 492, to oppose the Lupercalia of the Pagans. On this point we have the following authority of the Venerable Bede: "The church has happily changed the Pagan lustrations around the fields, which took place in the month of February, into processions in which lighted candles are borne, in memory of that divine light with which Jesus Christ has illuminated the world, and which occasioned him to be called by Simeon the light for the revelation of the Gentiles." Others, however, maintain that Candlemas was a substitute for the feast of Proserpine, which the Pagans celebrated with lighted torches towards the beginning of February. Many church festivals are doubtless to be traced to the same origin. "Christian, or rather Papal, Rome," says Brand,* "has borrowed her rites, notions, and ceremonies, even in the most luxuriant abundance, from ancient and modern Rome; much the greater number of those flaunting externals which infallibility has adopted by way of feathers, to adorn the *triple cap*, having been stolen out of the wings of the dying eagle."

Feasts, processions, shows, spectacles, mysteries, moralities, mummeries, and all the pride, pomp, and circum-

* Popular Antiquities, Preface.

stance of worship, which have probably exercised a beneficial influence in winning or attaching to religion the illiterate people among whom they were first instituted and practised, are generally modified or dropped as advanced civilization and knowledge render them unnecessary. The essentials of religion always remain the same; but in this, as in every other institution, we must vary and adapt external forms to the state of general information, and the influences of public opinion. Whatever may have been the original cause of their institution, the number of feasts and holydays in the ancient Romish church, added to the Sabbaths, must have afforded to the labouring classes as many, and perhaps more, respites from labour than they had enjoyed in the Pagan times; while the pomps, processions, and shows of the new faith became indispensable substitutes, at least in the estimation of the vulgar, for the heathen spectacles and celebrations which they superseded.

The Norman conquest effected two marked changes in the sports and pastimes prevalent at the close of the Saxon era, by restricting the privileges of the chase, and first establishing those barbarous game-laws, the imposition of which was one of the greatest insults of tyranny, while their maintenance, in scarcely mitigated severity, at the present enlightened era, cannot be otherwise designated than as a monstrous oppression upon the lower orders, and a flagrant outrage offered to the spirit of the times. When these laws were first passed, it might have been felt as some mitigation of their enormity, that they were enacted by a foreign despot, in right of conquest, and by virtue of the sword, which was then paramount over all legislation; but it must aggravate the bitterness of their present tyranny to know that these sanguinary statutes are upheld, and even made more terrible by those who ought naturally to be the protectors, and not the imprisoners and persecutors unto death of their poorer fellow-countrymen. The second notable change in our pastimes, occasioned by the advent of the Normans, was the introduction of tournaments and jousts, together with all the pomps, gallantries, and observances of chivalry, which, although they all bore the visible impress of war, were decidedly civilizing, and even ennobling, in their general tendency.

All good and faithful knights swore by the symbolical

cross on the pummel of their swords to be the stanch champions of Christianity, which now, for the first time, began to exercise a marked influence upon the usages of war; at once exalting that courage which had previously been a brutal impulse into a noble principle, and tempering it with generosity, mercy, and forbearance: while the romantic deference for the weaker sex, which forms such a distinguishing characteristic of chivalry, polished and completed the manners of the cavalier, by adding suavity and gentleness to his other accomplishments. Nor were personal comeliness, strength, and agility, together with perfect horsemanship, and adroitness in all martial exercises, the sole qualifications he was expected to possess: to invincible courage and a strict regard for veracity, it was requisite that he should add graceful dancing and a competent knowledge of music. Hunting and hawking were also acquirements that he was obliged to possess as soon as he had strength enough to practise them. Of Sir Tristram, who is held forth as the mirror of chivalry in the romance of "The Death of Arthur," we are told that he had not only acquired the language of France, and all the rules of courtly behaviour, but "in harping and on instruments of music he applied himself in his youth for to learne; and after, as he growed in might and strength, he laboured ever in hunting and hawking." Another ancient romance says of its hero, "He every day was provyd in dancing and in songs that the ladies could think were convenable for a nobleman to conne. The king for to assay him made justs and turnies; and no man did so well as he in runnyng, playing at the paume,* shotyng, and castyng of the barre, nor found he his maister." Reading might perhaps be implied, but it is not expressly mentioned as an essential accomplishment. It is evident, however, that under the ennobling influences of chivalry and of female society, the mind began to be cultivated as well as the powers of the body; and that the manners of the Saxon times were improved by an infusion of incipient politeness and urbanity. Where these qualities distinguish the upper classes, fashion will soon make them penetrate, at least partially, into the lower: we find accordingly that the sons of citizens and

* Hand-tennis.

yeomen and more especially the young Londoners, affected in all their sports and pastimes an imitation of the martial exercises and usages of chivalry. They fought with clubs and bucklers; they practised running at the quintain; and when the frost set in, they would go upon the ice, and tilt at one another with poles, in imitation of lances in a joust: rude pastimes it must be confessed, but as they were doubtless accompanied with the strict regard to honour and fairness, as well as with the generosity and forbearance that characterized the exercises of chivalry from which they were copied, they could not fail to have a beneficial effect upon popular manners.

When chivalry lost its primitive spirit, and the romantic enthusiasm which had distinguished the middle ages began to decline, a marked change occurred in the education of the nobility, the mind receiving a more attentive cultivation, and gentler pastimes or sedentary amusements coming into vogue; while bodily exercises and the exertions of muscular strength were abandoned to the vulgar. This alteration soon began to exercise its influence upon the inferior classes, who gradually discontinued the sports that had sprung up from an imitation of the jousts and tournaments, and who, though they had not the means, nor perhaps the inclination, to imitate their betters in mental culture, readily aped them in their vices, resorting to games and recreations that promoted idleness, dissipation, and gambling.

Personal prowess and vigour being rendered in a great measure unnecessary by the invention of gunpowder, and the consequent revolution in all the modes of war, chivalry began to decay towards the latter part of the fifteenth century, especially in this country, where the wars of the Roses occupied the nobility and gentry, and real battles afforded but little leisure for exercising the mockery of war. Tilts and tournaments, indeed, continued to be occasionally displayed, sometimes with prodigious splendour and magnificence, until the end of the following century, being usually exhibited at coronations, royal marriages, and other occasions where pomp and pageantry were required: but these shadows of extinct chivalry possessed none of the utility, and therefore none of the vital spirit, with which it had been animated in former days. What had once been a valuable school of war, and of all knightly accomplish-

ments, had now degenerated into a tawdry and unmeaning game.

Proud of his bodily strength and agility, and anxious to display them, Henry VIII. once more gave a temporary fashion to military pastimes and violent corporeal exercises. Even after his accession to the throne, according to his biographer Hall, he continued daily to amuse himself in archery, casting of the bar, wrestling, or dancing, and frequently in tilting, tourneying, fighting at the barriers with swords and battle-axes, and such like martial recreations. These were not practised, however, to the exclusion of intellectual pursuits, for we learn from the same authority that he spent his leisure time in playing at the recorders, flute, and virginals, in setting of songs, singing, and making of ballads. In the succeeding century we have the following description of the sports and amusements of Charles, Lord Mountjoy.* "He delighted in study, in gardens, in riding on a pad to take the air, in playing at shovelboard, at cards, and in reading of play-books for recreation, and especially in fishing and fish-ponds, seldom useing any other exercises, and useing these rightly as pastimes, only for a short and convenient time, and with great variety of change from one to the other."

James I., in a set of rules drawn up by himself and addressed to his eldest son Henry, Prince of Wales, gives the following instruction respecting his recreations: "From this court I debarre all rough and violent exercises; as the foote-ball, meeter for laming than making able the users thereof; as likewise such tumbling trickes as only serve for comœdians and balladines to win their bread with: but the exercises that I would have you to use, although but moderately, not making a craft of them, are running, leaping, wrestling, fencing, dancing, and playing at the caitch, or tennise, archerie, palle-malle, and such like other fair and pleasant field-games. And the honourablest and most recommendable games that yee can use on horseback, and especially such as may teach you to handle your arms thereon—such as the tilt, the ring, and low-riding for handling of your sword. I cannot omit here the hunting, namely, with running houndes, which is the most honourable and noblest sort thereof; for it is a thievish form of

* From the Itinerary of Fynes Morison, published A. D 1617.

hunting to shoote with gunnes and bowes; and greyhound hunting is not so martial a game. As for hawkinge, I condemn it not; but I must praise it more sparingly, because it neither resembleth the wars so neere as hunting, and is more uncertain and subject to mischances; and, which is worst of all, is there-through an extreme stirrer up of the passions.

"As for sitting or house pastimes, since they may at times supply the rooms which, being empty, would be patent to pernicious idleness, I will not therefore agree with the curiosity of some learned men of our age in forbidding cards, dice, and such like games of hazard: when it is foul or stormy weather, then, I say, may ye lawfully play at the cardes or tables; for, as to dicing, I think it becommeth best deboshed souldiers to play at on the heads of their drums, being only ruled by hazard, and subject to knavish cogging; and as for the chesse, I think it overfonde, because it is overwise and philosophicke folly."

After the wars of the parliament, when the pleasure-hating puritans gained the ascendency, the pastimes of all classes, but more especially of the lower orders, suffered a miserable suspension and abridgment. Austerity and mortification were enforced by those morose ascetics with a blind rigour that confounded the most innocent recreations with others of which the suppression, or at least the regulation, might perhaps have been desirable. Not only were the theatres and public gardens closed, but a war of bigotry was carried on against May-poles, wakes, fairs, organs, fiddles, dancing, Whitsun-ales, puppet-shows, and almost every thing else that wore the semblance of popular amusement and diversion. The recoil of the national mind, thus forcibly wrested from its natural bias, occasioned that burst of licentiousness and general demoralization which disgraced the return and the reign of Charles II.; a warning that ought not to be forgotten by the modern puritans, who would restrict the harmless pastimes of our labouring classes.

It was not until the discontinuance of bodily exercises afforded leisure for mental improvement, that the cultivation of letters and learning began to be esteemed an indispensable part of a polite education. Some of the nobility, however, proud, as it should seem, of the ignorance which

had been "handed down to them by the wisdom of their ancestors," clung to the old prejudices against book-learning. "It is enough," said a person of high rank to the secretary of Henry VIII., "it is enough for the sons of the nobility to wind their horn and carry their hawk fair, and leave study and learning to the children of meaner people." We have young patricians of the present day who act up to the spirit of this diction; while we have sapient graybeards in the same class, who, having themselves mastered their letters, seem to be afraid that letters might become their masters, if they suffered them to be generally acquired by the lower classes.

Burton, in his Anatomy of Melancholy, gives us a general view of the sports most prevalent in the seventeenth century. "Cards, dice, hawks, and hounds," he observes, "are rocks upon which men lose themselves, when they are imprudently handled and beyond their fortunes. Hunting and hawking are honest recreations, and fit for some great men, but not for every base inferior person, who while they maintain their falconer, and dogs, and hunting nags, their wealth runs away with their hounds, and their fortunes fly away with their hawks." He recapitulates as the common pastimes both of town and country, "bull-baitings and bear-baitings, in which our countrymen and citizens greatly delight, and frequently use; dancers on ropes, jugglers, comedies, tragedies, artillery-gardens, and cock-fighting. Ordinary recreations we have in winter, as cards, tables, dice, shovelboard, chess-play, the philosopher's game, small trunks, shuttlecock, billiards, music, masks, singing, dancing, ule games, &c." To this catalogue he adds "dancing, singing, masking, mumming, and stage-plays are reasonable recreations if in season; as are May-games, wakes, Whitsun-ales. Let them"—that is, the common people—"freely feast, sing, dance, have puppet-plays, hobby-horses, tabors, crowds (i. e. fiddles), and bagpipes. Plays, masks, jesters, tumblers, and jugglers are to be winked at, lest the people should do worse than attend them."

Strype's edition of Stow's Survey, published in the year 1720, gives us the following general view of the pastimes of the Londoners: "The modern sports of the citizens," says the editor, "besides drinking, are cock-fighting, bowl-

ing upon greens, playing at tables of backgammon, cards, dice, and billiards; also musical entertainments, dancing, masks, balls, stage-plays, and club-meetings in the evening; and they sometimes ride out on horseback, and hunt with the lord mayor's pack of dogs, when the common hunt goes out. The lower classes divert themselves at football, wrestling, cudgels, ninepins, shovelboard,* cricket, snowball, ringing of bells, quoits, pitching the bar, bull and bear-baitings, throwing at cocks, and lying at alehouses."

In addition to peculiar and extensive privileges of hunting, hawking, and fishing, the Londoners had large portions of ground allotted to them in the vicinity of the city, for such pastimes as were best calculated to render them strong and healthy. The city damsels had also their recreation on the celebration of these festivals, dancing to the accompaniment of music, and continuing their sports by moonlight. Stow tells us that in his time it was customary for the maidens, after evening prayers, to dance and sing in the presence of their masters and mistresses, the best performer being rewarded with a garland. Who can peruse the recapitulation of London sports and amusements, even so late as the beginning of the last century, without being struck by the contrast it presents in its present state, when, as a French traveller observes, it is no longer a city, but a province covered with houses? In the whole world, probably, there is no large town so utterly unprovided with means of healthful recreation for the mass of the citizens. Every vacant and green spot has been converted into a street; field after field has been absorbed by the builder; all the scenes of popular resort have been smothered with piles of brick; football and cricket-grounds, bowling-greens, and the enclosures or open places set apart for archery and other pastimes, have been successively parceled out in squares, lanes, or alleys; the increasing value of land and extent of the city render it impossible to find substitutes; and the humbler classes who may wish to obtain the sight of a field, or inhale a mouthful of fresh air, can scarcely be gratified unless, at some expense of time and money, they make a journey for the purpose. Even our parks, not

* The shovelboard, once an indispensable appendage to the hall of great houses, had now become vulgar, its place being probably supplied by a billiard-table.

unaptly termed the lungs of the metropolis, have been partially invaded by the omnivorous builder; nor are those portions of them which are still open available to the commonalty for purposes of pastime and sport. Under such circumstances, who can wonder that they should lounge away their unemployed time in the skittle-grounds of alehouses and gin-shops? or that their immorality should have increased with the enlargement of the town, and the compulsory discontinuance of their former healthful and harmless pastimes? It would be wise to revive, rather than seek any further to suppress them: wiser still would it be, with reference both to the bodily and moral health of the people, if, in all new enclosures for building, provision were legally made for the unrestricted enjoyment of their games and diversions, by leaving large open spaces to be appropriated to that purpose.

Upon a general review of our present prevailing amusements, it will be found, that if many have been dropped, at least in the metropolis, which it might have been desirable to retain, several have also been abandoned of which we cannot by any means regret the loss; while those that remain to us, participating in the advancement of civilization, have in some instances become much more intellectual in their character, and in others have assumed some elegant, humane, and unobjectionable forms. Bull and bear-baiting, cock-throwing and fighting, and such like barbarous pastimes, have long been on the wane, and will, it is to be hoped, soon become totally extinct. That females of rank and education should now frequent such savage scenes, seems so little within the scope of possibility that we can hardly credit their ever having done so, even in times that were comparatively barbarous.*

We extract from a work published in 1575, the following description of a bear-baiting, not so much in illustration of our subject, as because it presents to the reader a curious specimen of the true London dialect and orthography at that

* Among the entertainments provided for Queen Elizabeth by the accomplished Earl of Leicester, on her visit to Kenilworth Castle, was "a grand bear-baiting, to which were added tumbling and fireworks." "Her majesty" says Rowland White, in the Sidney Papers, "hath commanded the beares, the bull, and the ape to be to-morrow bayted in the tilt-yard, and on Wednesday she will have solemne dauncing."

period; "Well, syr, the beerz wear brought foorth into the court, the dogs wear set to them, to argu the pointz cum face to face. They had learned counsel too a' both partis. Very feerse both t'one and t'other, and eager in argument. If the dog in pleadyng would pluk the bear by the thrate, the bear with havers woold claw him again by the scalp. *Confess* an he list, but *avoyd* a coold not that was bound too the bar. Thearfore thus, each fending and proovyng, with plucking and lugging, skralling and bytyng, by plain tooth and nayll, a t'one side and t'oother. Such expens of blood and leather waz thear between them, as a month's licking, I wean, will not recover.

"It waz a sport very pleazaunt of theeze beastz, to see the bear with his pinkneyes leering after hiz enemie's approach; the nimbleness and wayt too of the dog too take hiz advantage; and the forz and experiens of the bear agayn to avoyd the assault. If he wear bitten in one place hoow he would pynch in another too get free; that if he wear taken onez, than, what shyft with bytyng, with clawyng, with roryng, tossyng, and tumblyng, he could woorke too wynd hymselfe from them. And when he was lose, to shake his ears twyse or thryse with the blood and slaver about his fiznamy, waz a matter of a goodly reliefe," &c.

Paul Hentzner, after describing the baiting of bulls and bears, adds, "To this entertainment there often follows that of whipping a blinded bear, which is performed by five or six men standing circularly with whips, which they exercise on him without mercy, as he cannot escape from them because of his chain. At this spectacle, and every where else, the English are constantly smoking tobacco."

Stevens, the commentator on Shakspeare, observes that in some counties of England a cat was formerly closed up with a quantity of soot in a cask suspended on a line. He who beat out the bottom as he ran under it, and was nimble enough to escape its contents, was regarded as the hero of this inhuman diversion, which was terminated by hunting to death the unfortunate cat. The peculiar persecution to which these animals were formerly subjected is thought to have originated in their supposed intimacy with the witches —a suspicion which was quite sufficient to render them unpopular with the ignorant vulgar.

It will not easily find belief, in these days of rigorous

observance, that the time usually appropriated for the exhibition of these and other barbarous games, as well as for the performance of plays and interludes, and the amusements of cards, music, dancing, and other diversions, was the after-part of the Sabbath-day.

Erasmus has said that human reason is like a drunken clown attempting to mount a horse; if you help him up on one side, he is very apt to fall over on the other;—a dictum which has never been more pointedly illustrated than in the various and contradictory ways wherein the Sabbath has been observed in the different ages and countries of the world. There is diversity even in the day itself, still more so in the mode of its celebration. As the law of Moses, however severe it may be against the profanation by labour of the appointed day of rest, nowhere proscribes innocent recreation, there is reason to conclude that, in the earlier ages, the Sabbath was equally consecrated to religious solemnities and innocent enjoyments. Of all those superstitious statutes which we find specified in the Talmud, and which in the latter days of the Hebrews made the observance of the Sabbath a weekly plague of the most grievous kind, Moses has not one single word. They were inventions of the traditionists and Pharisees, seeking to conceal their want of real religion by fantastical ceremonies and ridiculous external observances. Christ lost no opportunity of combating and condemning these austerities, more especially when he declared, as if for the express purpose of setting the question at rest for ever, that "the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." Among the early Christians it was so especially a day of joy and gladness, that all fasting on it was prohibited, even during the great annual fast of Lent. The council of Laodicea went so far as to allow working if great necessity required it. By the statute 27 Henry VI. fairs or markets are forbidden to be held on any Sunday, except the four Sundays in harvest. There is extant a license dated 1572, permitting one John Swinton Powlter "to use playes and games on nine severall Sundaies; and because great resort of people is like to come thereunto, he is to have proper persons to keep peace and quiet during the continuance of such playes and games." And yet, only eight years afterward, and in the same queen's reign, the magistrates of London procured an

edict to be issued, "that all heathenish playes and interludes should be banished upon sabbath-days,"* but this is understood as only applying to the jurisdiction of the lord mayor; for three years afterward a prodigious concourse of people being assembled on a Sunday afternoon at the Paris Gardens in Southwark, to see plays and a bear-baiting, the theatre fell with their weight, when many were killed and more wounded. The successor of Elizabeth, on the other hand, thinking that the restrictions on the public sports were too generally and too strictly applied, especially in the public places, published the following declaration:† "Whereas we did justly, in our progress through Lancashire, rebuke some puritanes and precise people, in prohibiting and unlawfully punishing of our good people for using their lawful recreations and honest exercises on Sundayes and other holidayes, after the afternoone sermon or service: It is our will, that after the end of Divine service our good people be not disturbed, letted, or discouraged from any lawful recreation, such as dauncing, either for men or women; archery for men, leaping, vaulting, or any other such harmless recreation; nor for having of May-games, Whitson-ales, and morris-daunces, and the setting up of Maypoles and other sports therewith used; so as the same be had in due and convenient time, without impediment or neglect of Divine service. But withall, we do still account here, as prohibited, all unlawful games to be used on Sundays onely, as beare and bull-baitings, interludes, and, at all times in the meaner sort of people by law prohibited, bowling."‡

This proclamation was confirmed by Charles I., to the great displeasure of those who regarded these amusements as unlawful on the Sabbath, and many of them unlawful in themselves, apart from any alleged profanity of the day;

* Her majesty does not appear to have objected to other Sabbath pastimes. In the list of the Kenilworth entertainments we read, that "On Sunday evening she was entertained with a grand display of fireworks, as well in the air as upon the water."

† See the introduction to Strutt's Sports and Pastimes, and the preface to Brand's Popular Antiquities, from which parts of the preceding summary have been abridged.

‡ In the subsequent part of this chapter the publishers have omitted some of the author's observations and modified others, in order to render the work more acceptable to the American public.

and on their obtaining the helm of government, they enforced a rigid observance of the Sabbath, which was not less exceptionable than the other extreme in its effects, for the law of force may make hypocrites, but it will ever fail to make Christians. The Restoration again made the Sabbath afternoon a time of sport and pastime, and too often of licentiousness: so that, driven by the authority of law from one extreme to another, the poor commonalty of England must have been sadly puzzled how to comport themselves properly on their weekly holyday, or what to think of an institution which gave rise to such conflicting edicts, all enforced by the pains and penalties of law, and all diametrically opposed to each other.

From the time of the Revolution, there has been an increasing tendency to compel a rigorous observance of the Sabbath, which is supposed by some to savour of pharisaical bigotry and intolerance. There is, doubtless, a possibility of pushing the restraints of law so far as to defeat the object for which they are employed, and this perhaps has sometimes been the case in the attempts made to enforce observance of the Sabbath, especially when rigid and ascetical regulations were enforced by harsh and severe penalties. For the sake of religion herself, it is not proper to enjoin those peculiar austerities which, in the minds of the vulgar, tend to associate her with gloom, sadness, mortification, and ennui.

Still, however, the importance of the Sabbath, in a civil as well as religious point of light, should never be lost sight of by an enlightened legislature. Christianity, which can only exist where the Sabbath is reverenced, has founded all our noble institutions, introduced free government and general happiness, and with no other compulsory sway than that of light and love, as the sun reigns over the world; and this alone can pour temporal and eternal riches upon every region of our earth.

The laws of every government professedly Christian ought to recognise the Sabbath as of Divine appointment, and open profanation of the day, by gross and public profligacy or dissipation, should be prohibited by law. But the restraints of law should be directed at prohibitions rather than injunctions. They should act negatively, not positively; and so long as the operations of law are directed to restrain

the irregular and dissolute from open profanation of the day, the peace and good order of society will be maintained, and such measures will receive the approbation of every intelligent citizen of any government. Political freedom can never be dissevered from virtue; virtue is but another name for the sense of moral responsibility to God; and this moral sense cannot live in a land where the Sabbath is publicly disregarded. It will ever be a true sentiment that no legislature can license sin; no human power can make that lawful which is unlawful in itself;—nor can any government justify that which the book of nature and the book of revelation alike proclaim to be contrary to the law of God.

Finally, let all the religious observances of the Sabbath be duly attended, and let Christians everywhere content themselves with the single weapons of persuasion and example;—meaning, by persuasion, an open and candid statement of facts, arguments, and motives; and by example, the conscientious regulation of their own conduct, in accordance with the requisitions of the fourth commandment. He who instead of observing its ordinances, abandons himself to profligate or forbidden indulgences is a Sabbath-breaker; so is he who dedicates it to the worship of his own narrow notions, for this is self-idolatry; who saddens it by misery and moroseness, for this is ingratitude towards heaven; who imbitters it with bigotry and intolerance, for this is uncharitableness towards his fellow-creatures.

CHAPTER X.

Holyday Notices.

"Thus times do shift, each thing his turne does hold;
New things succeed, as former things grow old."
Herrick

As the festivals take precedence in our titlepage, we shall briefly notice those that are most distinguished, and the modes of their celebration, before we proceed to the subject of games and amusements, avoiding in our summary such

minute researches as would little please the general reader, however they may interest the professed antiquary. Inquirers of the latter character having often thrown so much light upon the subject as to obscure it by their illustrations, it may perhaps be rendered more intelligible as well as attractive by presenting it in a more condensed and simple form; though even in this shape we may often have to repeat that with which the reader is already conversant.

New-year's Day.—It is at once so natural and so laudable to commemorate the nativity of the new year, which is a sort of second birthday of our own, by acts of grateful worship to heaven, and of beneficence towards our fellow-creatures, that this mode of its celebration will be found to have prevailed, with little variety of observance, among all ages and people. Congratulations, visits, and presents of figs and dates, covered with gold-leaf, are said to have distinguished New-year's Day even in the times of Romulus and Tatius, and to have continued under the Roman emperors, until the practice, being abused into a mode of extortion, was prohibited by Claudius. Yet the Christian emperors still received them, although they were condemned by ecclesiastical councils on account of the Pagan ceremonies at their presentation; so difficult was it found, in the earlier ages of Christianity, to detach the newly-converted people from their old observances. The Druids of ancient Britain were accustomed on certain days to cut the sacred misletoe with a golden knife, in a forest dedicated to the gods, and to distribute its branches with much ceremony as New-year's gifts to the people. Among the Saxons and northern nations this anniversary was also observed by gifts, accompanied with such extraordinary festivity, that they reckoned their age by the number of these merrimakings at which they had been present. The Roman practice of interchanging presents and of giving them to servants, remained in force during the middle and later ages, especially among our kings and nobility; Henry III. appearing to have even imitated some of the Roman emperors by extorting them,* and Queen Elizabeth being accused of principally supporting her wardrobe and jewelry by levying similar contribu-

* According to Mr. Ellis, who quotes Matthew Paris in proof of his assertion.

tions.* Pins were acceptable New-year's gifts to the ladies, as substitutes for the wooden skewers which they used till the end of the fifteenth century. Instead of this present they sometimes received a composition in money, whence the allowance for their separate use is still termed "pin-money."

To the credit of the kindly and amiable feelings of the French, they bear the palm from all other nations in the extent and costliness of their New-year's gifts. It has been estimated that the amount expended upon *bon-bons* and sweetmeats alone, for presents on New-year's Day in Paris, exceeds 20,000*l.* sterling; while the sale of jewelry and fancy articles in the first week in the year is computed at one-fourth of the sale during the twelve months. It is by no means uncommon for a Parisian of 8000 or 10,000 francs a-year to make presents on New-year's Day which cost him a fifteenth part of his income. At an early hour of the morning this interchange of visits and *bon-bons* is already in full activity, the nearest relations being first visited, until the furthest in blood and their friends and acquaintance have all had their calls. A dinner is given by some member of the family to all the rest, and the evening concludes, like Christmas Day, with cards, dancing, or other amusements.

In London, New-year's Day is not observed by any public festivity; the only open demonstration of joy is the ringing of merry peals from the belfries of the numerous steeples late on the eve of the old year, until after the chimes of the clock have sounded its last hour. We may have done well to drop what Prynne, in his Histrio-Mastix, calls "a meere relique of Paganisme and idolatry, derived from the heathen Romans' feast of two-faced Janus, which was spent in mummeries, stage plays, dancing, and such like interludes, wherein fiddlers and others acted lascivious effeminate parts, and went about the towns and cities in women's apparel;" but, however the celebration of New-year's Day may have been disfigured in the earlier ages by Pagan associations and superstitious rites, nothing can be

* This is Dr. Drake's opinion, whose researches prove her majesty to have even received New-year's gifts from her household servants. Among others, the dustman is recorded as having presented her with two bolts of cambric. Unless these donations were upon the calculating principle of *do ut des*, their reception implies great meanness.

more truly Christian than to usher it in with every cheerful observance that may express gratitude towards Heaven, and promote a kindly and a social feeling among our friends and fellow-creatures.

Twelfth Day is so called because it is the twelfth day after the Nativity. It is also termed the Epiphany, or Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles, when the eastern magi were guided by the star to pay their homage to the Saviour. The festive rites and gambols of this anniversary were originally intended to commemorate the magi, who were supposed to be kings. In France, one of the courtiers was formerly chosen king, and waited upon by the real monarch and his nobles in a grand entertainment; in Germany they practise a similar custom among the scholars at the colleges, and the citizens at civic banquets; at our own universities, not many years ago, and in private entertainments still, it is customary to give the name of king to that person whose portion of the divided cake contains the lucky bean, or the royally-inscribed label, and to honour him with a mock homage. This mode of perpetuating the remembrance of the eastern kings seems to have been partly borrowed from the Roman saturnalia, when the masters made a banquet for their servants, and waited upon them; and partly from the Roman custom of drawing lots or beans for the title of king, when the fortunate party was declared monarch of the festive circle, over which he exercised full authority until they separated. The festival of kings, as this day is called in an ancient calendar of the Romish church, was continued with feasting for many days. "To what base uses may we not return?" In 1792, during the French Revolution, when kings of all sorts were suffering proscription, *la fête des rois* was abolished as anti-civic, and Twelfth Day took the name of *la fête des sans culottes*. To this nominal change the people willingly yielded assent, but they would not resign the festival and the good cheer, and they were quite right. As a religious memento, the cake and its concomitants may be idle and perhaps irreverent, but it is a pity to let any custom fall into desuetude which promotes social mirth and happiness, and fills every juvenile class with pleasant anticipations and recollections from Christmas to Candlemas.

Candlemas Day, 2d February.—The Purification of the Virgin Mary. It has already been intimated that this feast

was derived from the Romans, though writers differ both as to the Pagan ceremony, of which it was an imitation, and as to the pope by whom it was first established. Some affirm that it was copied from the festival of Februa, the mother of Mars, when the Pagans were accustomed to run about the streets with lighted torches; and that in the year of our Lord 684, Pope Sergius, "in order to undo this false mummery and untrue belief, and turn it into God's worship and our Lady's, gave commandment that all Christian people should come to church, and offer up a candle brennyng, in the worship that they did to this woman Februa, and do worship to our Lady." In some of the ancient illuminated calendars, a woman holding a taper in each hand is represented in the month of February. The following is given as one of the prayers used at the hallowing of candles. "O Lord Jesu Christ, ✝ blesse thou this creature of a waxen taper at our humble supplication, and by the vertue of thy holy crosse, poure thou into it an heavenly benediction; that as thou hast graunted it unto man's use for the expelling of darknes, it may receive such a strength and blessing thorow the token of thy holy cross, that in what places soever it be lighted or set, the divel may avoid out of those habitacions, and tremble for feare, and fly away discouraged, and presume no more to unquiete them that serve thee," &c.

"There is a general tradition," says Sir Thomas Browne, in his Vulgar Errors, "in most parts of Europe, that infereth the coldnesse of succeeding winter from the shining of the sun on Candlemas Day, according to the proverbial distich—

> Si sol splendescat Mariâ purificante,
> Major erit glacies post festum quam fuit ante.

Candle-carrying on this day remained in England till its abolition by an order in council in the second year of King Edward VI.

Valentine Day, 14th February.—This also seems to have been a festival inherited from the ancient Romans, but fathered upon St. Valentine in the earlier ages of the church, in order to Christianize it. There is no occurrence in the legend of the saint, a presbyter, beheaded under the Emperor Claudius, that can have given rise to the ceremonies observed on his anniversary, which are too well

known to need any description. Birds are said to choose their mates about this time of year, whence probably came the custom of young persons selecting valentines, and of sending some amatory or flattering effusion to the object of their preference. This is the commonly-received opinion; but Brand, in his Popular Antiquities, seems inclined to suppose that the observance originated in an ancient Romish superstition of choosing patrons on this day for the ensuing year, a custom which gallantry took up when superstition at the Reformation had been compelled to let it fall. It is a ceremony, says Bourne, never omitted among the vulgar, to draw lots, which they term valentines, on the eve before Valentine Day. The names of a select number of one sex are by an equal number of the other put into some vessel; and after that every one draws a name, which for the present is called their valentine, and is looked upon as a good omen of their being man and wife afterward. This sport appears to have been practised in the houses of the English gentry as early as the year 1476. Among the same class it was deemed obsolete in 1645. In the "Forest of Varieties," of that date, Lord North, its author, says, "The custome and charge of valentines is not ill left, with many other such costly and idle customs, which by a tacit generall consent wee lay downe as obsolete." The amusements of the common people, however, hardly ever wear out; in confirmation of which we may state, that at the present time two hundred thousand letters beyond the usual daily average annually pass through the twopenny post-office in London on St. Valentine's Day.

Shrove Tuesday, or Shrove-tide, was set apart by the Romish church for shriving or confessing sins and receiving the sacrament, that people might be better prepared for the following season of Lent. This custom was abandoned at the Reformation, no confession to the spiritual guide being allowed, except when the conscience cannot otherwise be quieted; in which case the grief is to be revealed to him in private for the benefit of his prayers and counsel. It was a season of great feasting and intemperance, as if it were necessary to eat and drink to excess, in order to prepare for the coming fast; a mode of celebrating the day derived doubtless from the Romish *Carni-vale*, or farewell to flesh, the meat being anciently prepared at this season to last

during the winter by salting, drying, and being hung up. Shrove Tuesday, being the last day of the carnival, was more especially devoted to feasting, foolery, and riot of all sorts; but whence originated the custom of eating pancakes, which extended to other countries besides England, and was of very ancient observance, does not seem to be decided; though Mr. Fosbrooke is of opinion that it was taken from the heathen Fornacalia, celebrated on the 18th of February, in memory of making bread before ovens were invented by the goddess Fornax. Among the sports of the day cock-fighting and throwing at cocks appear almost every where to have prevailed, and at a very early period. The nature of these sports indeed, both of them ruthless and savage, the latter adding unmanly cowardice to the most revolting cruelty, points to a barbarous era for their first introduction. Strange that Christians, even in a dark age, should have found pleasure in such inhuman pastime! stranger still that in the present enlightened era men can be found brutal enough to continue the atrocity! Its first meaning and intention, for such it probably had, since the custom is peculiar to the day, remains buried in obscurity. The writer of a pamphlet published in 1761, after stigmatizing this cruel diversion as a horrible abuse of time—"an abuse so much the more shocking as it is shown in tormenting the very creature which seems by nature intended for our remembrancer to improve it: the creature whose voice like a trumpet summoneth man forth to his labour in the morning, and admonisheth him of the flight of his most precious hours throughout the day"—has the following observation; "Whence it had its rise among us I could never yet learn to my satisfaction; but the common account of it is, that the crowing of a cock prevented our Saxon ancestors from massacring their conquerors the Danes, on the morning of a Shrove Tuesday, while asleep in their beds."

Hearne tells us, in the preface to the edition of Thomas Otterbourne, that this custom must be traced to the time of King Henry V., and our victories then gained over the French, whose name in Latin is synonymous with that of a cock; our countrymen meaning to intimate that they could at any time overthrow the Gallic armies as easily as they could knock down the cocks on Shrove Tuesday. The knightly amusement of tilting at a Saracen's head, a

practice which had its rise in the holy wars, might by analogy afford some support to Hearne's explanation of throwing at cocks; but unfortunately the latter barbarity appears to have been also practised in France long before the time of Henry V., and our neighbours can hardly have found pleasure in pelting and knocking down themselves, even typically.

Another writer conjectures that the whipping of tops, the tossing of pancakes in the fryingpan, and the battering of cocks with missiles bear allusion to the sufferings and torments of some of the martyrs. Erasmus could discover no other intelligible motive for the prevalence of the latter detestable custom than insanity, produced by surfeiting upon pancakes! "The English," says he, "eat a certain cake on Shrove Tuesday, upon which they immediately run mad, and kill their poor cocks." As this day formerly wound up the Christmas festivities—for thus far might they be said to have continued—it may not be misplaced to remark, that no religious ceremonies are so long maintained and so punctually observed by the vulgar as those that have reference to their sensual enjoyments. Although a supper of eggs and fat bacon may not prove them to be good Christians, it will at least show that they are no Jews—wherefore has the gammon been always reverenced as an orthodox dainty. They like no odour of sanctity so well as that which fumes up to them from the kitchen; they have a wonderfully tenacious memory for all eating and drinking anniversaries, and never fail to observe with a becoming zeal all those religious rites and ceremonies which are celebrated in the stomach.

Ash Wednesday, which is the first day of Lent, is so called from the ancient ceremony of blessing ashes on that day, wherewith the priest signed the people on the forehead in the form of a cross, pronouncing at the same time this wholesome admonition—"Remember, man, thou art dust, and shalt return to dust." Platina, a priest, and librarian to the Vatican, relates, that Prochetus, archbishop of Geneva, being at Rome on Ash Wednesday, he fell at the feet of Pope Boniface VIII., who blessed and gave out the ashes on that day, in order to be signed with the blessed ashes as others had been. Thinking him to be his enemy, instead of uttering the usual form, the pope parodied it, and

said, "Remember thou art a Ghibelline, and with the Ghibellines thou shalt return to ashes," and then his holiness threw the ashes in the archbishop's eyes.* In a convocation held in the time of Henry VIII., this practice was preserved with some other rites and ceremonies which survived the shock that almost overthrew the whole pile of Catholic superstitions. In our present church we supply the ancient discipline of sackcloth and ashes by reading publicly on this day the curses denounced against impenitent sinners, when the people are directed to repeat an *amen* at the end of each malediction. Many conscientious persons abstain from participating in this form, under the impression that the commination of our prayer-book is hardly consistent with the mild character of Christianity and its injunctions of brotherly love and kindness. Lent was reckoned to begin on that which is now the first Sunday in Lent, and to end on Easter-eve, thus including forty-two days, from which if the six Sundays are deducted on which it was counted not lawful at any time of the year to fast, there will only remain thirty-six days. In order that the number of days which Christ fasted might be perfected, Pope Gregory added to Lent four days, viz. that which we now call Ash Wednesday and the three following days; "so that we see the first observation of Lent began from a superstitious, unwarrantable, and indeed profane conceit of imitating our Saviour's miraculous abstinence."†

St. David's Day, 1st March.—"In consequence of the romances of the middle ages," says Owen in his Cambrian Biography, p. 86, "which created the Seven Champions of Christendom, St. David has been dignified with the title of the Patron Saint of Wales; but this rank, however, is hardly known among the people of the principality, being a title diffused among them from England in modern times." For the custom of wearing the leek on this day various reasons have been assigned; but the majority of inquirers into this subject conjecture it to have arisen from the great victory gained by the British king Cadwallader over the Saxons at Hethfield Chase in Yorkshire, A. D. 633, when St. David directed the Britons to distinguish themselves

* Hone's Every-day Book, art. *Ash Wednesday.*
† Brand's Popular Antiquities, vol. i. p. 79.

from their enemies by wearing the leek; a regulation which, in conjunction with his prayers, enabled them to defeat the foe.

Coarse and ignorant ridicule of national peculiarities has always been a characteristic of the English populace, who bestowed their taunts as freely upon their fellow-subjects as upon foreigners—a failing which, though it may be softened in modern times, is by no means extinct. Formerly it was the custom with the London populace, on St. David's Day, to insult the Welsh by dressing up a man of straw to represent a Cambrian hero, which was carried in procession, and then hung in some conspicuous place; a provocation which probably did not always pass unavenged by the choleric sons of the principality. St. David's Day in London is now only celebrated by the society of Ancient Britons, who dine together to promote subscriptions for the Welsh Charity-school in Gray's-inn-road—a pleasant and laudable substitution for the old Catholic observances and the later fooleries of the mob, by which the anniversary has been celebrated, or rather disgraced.

St. Patrick's Day, 17th March.—The following reason is assigned for wearing the shamrock on this day: when the saint preached the gospel to the Pagan Irish, he illustrated the doctrine of the Trinity by showing them a trefoil, or three-leaved grass with one stalk, which operating to their conviction, the shamrock, which is a bundle of this grass, was ever afterward worn upon the saint's anniversary to commemorate the event. The natives of the sister island who reside in London now confer honour upon themselves and upon the day by dining together, and promoting donations for the cause of charity and the education of their poorer fellow-countrymen.

Lady Day, 25th March.—The Roman Catholic feast of the Annunciation is commonly thus called in England. It is the high festival of Catholicism, which, in consequence of the extreme honours it pays to the Virgin Mary, has been sometimes termed the "Marian religion." At Rome it is celebrated with every possible magnificence and solemnity. In England it is only remembered as the first quarter-day in the year, and is therefore only kept by landlords and tenants.

Palm Sunday.—The Sabbath before Easter is thus

denominated, because the boughs of palm-trees were carried in procession, in imitation of those which the children of Israel strewed before Christ. It was observed by the Catholics with much pomp and ceremony, the sacrament being carried upon an ass in solemn procession, accompanied by the choir and preceded by people strewing branches and flowers, all which Dr. Fulke thus stigmatizes: "Your Palm Sunday procession was horrible idolatry, turning the whole mystery of Christ's riding to Jerusalem to a May-game and pageant play." Henry VIII. declared that the bearing of palms upon Palm Sunday was to be continued; and it appears that they were borne in England till the second year of Edward VI. Palm Sunday still remains in our calendars; in country places the children go out early in the morning to gather branches of the willow or sallow, with their gray velvet-looking buds, the only substitute for palm which our fields afford at this early season; and in Covent-garden market there may be still found a basket-woman or two with palm, as they call it, for which they find a few customers on the Saturday before Palm Sunday. This remnant of the olden times will probably soon disappear altogether.

Maundy Thursday, or the Thursday before Easter, has much exercised the ingenuity of antiquaries to account for its name, which however seems to have been derived from the old Saxon word *mand* or *maund*, signifying a basket, whence alms came to be called *maundie*. Thus then Maundy Thursday, the day preceding Good Friday, on which the king distributes alms to a certain number of poor persons at Whitehall, is so called from the *maunds* in which the gifts were contained. In imitation of Christ washing his disciples' feet, the kings and queens of England anciently washed and kissed the feet of as many poor men and women as they were years old, besides bestowing their *maundy* on each. James II. is said to have been the last of our monarchs who performed this ceremony in person. It was afterward done by the almoner, and is now discontinued. The present donations consist of fish, meat, bread, and ale, in the morning, to which are added silver pennies and clothing in the afternoon, after the evening service.

Good Friday.—On this day was anciently performed the popish ceremony of creeping to the cross, in which, as it

appears from an old book of the ceremonial of the kings of England, the monarchs were accustomed to take a part, as well as the queen and her ladies. The image of the crucifix being dressed up so as to represent the Saviour, worship was made to it, accompanied with various offerings and superstitious observances. Nor was this all, for according to Googe's English version of Naogeorgus—

> Another image doe they get, like one but newly dead,
> With legges stretch'd out at length, and handes upon his body spreade,
> And him with pompe and sacred song they beare unto his grave,
> His body all being wrapt in lawne, and silks and sarcenet brave;
> And down they kneele and kiss the grounde, their hands held up abrod,
> And knocking on their breastes, they make this wooden block a god.

All this profane mummery having long since been swept away, we retain none of the external observances of Good Friday except the hot-cross-buns, the edible part of the old celebrations having, as usual, survived all the others. These buns are the ecclesiastical *eulogiæ*, or consecrated loaves, formerly bestowed in the church as alms, or given to those who from any impediment could not receive the host, and which were marked with a cross, like the buns that have succeeded to them. Mr. Bryant deduces the Good Friday bun from the *bonn* or sacred bread which used to be offered to the Pagan gods, even so far back as the time of Cecrops.

All Fools' Day, 1st April.—Antiquarians have puzzled themselves and their readers in the attempt to account for the custom of fool-making; but their researches seem to have established nothing except that the practice is very ancient and very general. Not only in various parts of Europe does it obtain, but according to Colonel Pearce, it is in full force among the Hindoos at the celebration of their Huli festival, which is kept on the 31st of March. We have before us a great display of learning in various profound theories upon the subject, but as we have already intimated that they lead to no satisfactory or even plausible conclusion, we shall not further agitate the question, lest our readers should suspect that we mean to illustrate the practices of the day at their expense.

Easter Day, a festival instituted to commemorate the resurrection of our Saviour, occurs on the first Sunday after the full moon which happens upon or next after the 21st

day of March; and if the full moon happen upon a Sunday, Easter Day is the Sunday after. The name is derived from our Saxon ancestors, who at this season held a great festival in honour of the goddess Easter, probably the Astarte of the eastern nations. It has ever been considered by the church as a season of great festivity, and was signalized by extraordinary dramatic worship, with appropriate scenery, machinery, dresses, and decorations; the theatrical representations taking place in the churches, and the monks being the actors. Among many of the old trivial observances of this day we may note that the custom of eating a gammon of bacon, still preserved in many parts of England, was intended to show an abhorrence of Judaism at this solemn commemoration of the Lord's resurrection. Eggs, sometimes stained of a red colour to symbolize the shedding of the Saviour's blood, were commonly given at Easter, a custom which the learned De Gebelin, in his religious History of the Calendar, tells us may be traced up to the theology and philosophy of the Egytians, Persians, Gauls, Greeks, Romans, and other nations. Tansy cakes and puddings, in reference to the bitter herbs used by the Jews at this season, were eaten at Easter, and formed a common prize in the foot-races and games of hand-ball that prevailed at this season. Durand tell us that on Easter Tuesday wives used to beat their husbands; on the day following the husbands their wives. Probably both parties knew their deserts, and this was intended as a mutual punishment and atonement for their Greenwich-park and other pranks and misdeeds on the previous day.

CHAPTER XI.

Holyday Notices concluded.

"Come, let us go while we are in our prime,
And take the harmless follie of the time;
We shall grow old apace, and die
Before we know our liberty.
Our life is short, and our days run
As fast away as does the sunne,
And, as a vapour or a drop of rain,
Once lost can ne'er be found again;
So when or you or I are made
A fable, song, or fleeting shade,
All love, all liking, all delight
Lies drown'd with us in endless night.
Then, while time serves, and we are but decaying,
Come, my Corinna, come, let's go a Maying."

Herrick

Nothing less than a new chapter will satisfy us. It would have chilled our glowing hearts, it would have been felt as a profanation, had we, under the same section of our little work that detailed the miserable mistakes of God-dishonouring and man-degrading superstition, attempted to describe the inimitable and transcendent glories of May-day, the great and beneficent festival of all-loving Nature. Disappear! vanish! begone from our pages for awhile, ye paltry pomps and idle mummeries of human institution! Avaunt! for a brief space, all rites, ceremonies, sects, distinctions, that have sown disunion and hatred among men! —be dumb and stand rebuked! ye pseudo-champions of Omnipotence, teachers of the omniscient Deity, who, making gods of yourselves, and climbing impiously into the judgment-seat, dare to pronounce upon your fellow-mortals, telling us who shall be saved and who shall be condemned. Learn humility and forbearance if ye can, for such is wisdom—learn charity and universal love, for such is Christianity, from this great festival of Nature, not narrowed by bigotry and intolerance to one sect, one religion, or even one nation, but diffused over the whole earth, as if our com

mon Father, by thus showing an equal regard for all mankind as his children, would teach them all to love one another as brethren of the same family. Thus considered, May is the most instructive and religious, as well as the most delightful of all our festival times. It seems to be the bridal season of heaven and earth, and the whole month is their honeymoon. Does not the festal earth look like a bride, all beautiful as she is, and wreathed with flowers? Is not the sky like a rejoicing bridegroom, radiant with sunny smiles and robed in gorgeous clouds of gold and ermine? What nuptials were ever celebrated with such magnificence as these? What festival was ever half so joyous? Every hill-top, garlanded like an altar, fumes with incense; every place is spread with the materials of a present or a future banquet for all created races of men and animals; the trees wave their palmy branches exultingly in the bright air; the winds issue forth from the orchestral sky, some to pipe merrily aloft, some to make music with the rustling leaves; the streams, as they blithely dance along through the flowers, send forth a cheerful melody; the feathered songsters and the lowing herds mingle in the hymeneal strain, and this choral epithalamium finds a fitting bass in the deep-mouthed and sonorous sea. Oh! what a festival is this! How grand and solemn, even to sublimity, and yet how full of beauty, and happiness, and all-embracing love! Alas! that we should quit such a noble, such a heart-expanding jubilee to recur to the wretched mistakes of men, who, instead of imitating the wide benevolence of Nature, too often desecrate their holyday celebrations by hatred, intolerance, and superstition. But our task compels us, and we resume.

Many of our old May-day observances were doubtless derived from the heathen celebrations in honour of the goddess Flora, which consisted of licentious dances in the fields and woods, to the noise of trumpets. Thus it was the custom both here and in Italy for the youth of both sexes to proceed before daybreak to some neighbouring wood, accompanied with music and horns, to gather branches of nosegays, to return home about sunrise to deck their doors and windows with garlands, and to spend the afternoon in dancing around the May-pole, which, being placed in some conspicuous part of the village, stood there during the remainder of the year, as if it were consecrated to the

goddess of flowers. Well might our ancestors, and all the northern nations, after their long winter, welcome the returning splendour of the sun with the banquet and the dance, and rejoice that a better season had approached for the fishing and the hunting. Nor were the May-pole dances restricted to our villagers. Stow tells us, in his Survey of London, that on May-day morning, "Every man, except impediment, would walk into the sweet meddowes and green woods, there to rejoice their spirits with the beauty and savour of sweet flowers, and with the harmony of birds praising God in their kinde." He subsequently adds, "I find also that in the month of May the citizens of London of all estates had their several Mayings, and did fetch in May-poles with divers warlike shows, with good archers, morrice-dancers, and other devices for pastime all the day long, and towards the evening they had stage-plays, and bonfires in the streets." That Londoner must be a stout pedestrian, who can now walk to the sweet meadows and green woods, and ought to reckon upon a long holyday, for he might chance to be benighted before he found a branch of May. Sometimes the May-pole was brought home from the woods with great pomp, being drawn by twenty or forty yoke of oxen, each having its horns garlanded with flowers, with which, as well as with branches, flags, and streamers, the pole itself was profusely wreathed and decked. When it was reared up, arbours and bowers were formed beneath it, the ground was strewed with flowers, "and then," says Stubbes, a puritanical writer of Queen Elizabeth's days, "they fall to banquet and feast, to leape and dance about it, as the heathen people did at the dedication of their idolles, whereof this is a perfect pattern, or rather the thing itself." By an ordinance of the Long Parliament in April, 1644, all May-poles were taken down, and the games suppressed; but they were again permitted after the Restoration.

The author of a pamphlet entitled "The Way to Things by Words, and Words by Things," informs us that our ancestors held an anniversary assembly on May-day, and that the column of May (whence our May-pole) was the great standard of justice on the Ey-commons or fields of May. Here it was that the people if they saw cause deposed or punished their governors, their barons, and their kings. The judge's bough, or wand, now discontinued, and only

represented by a trifling nosegay, and the staff or rod of authority in the civil and in the military power (for it was the mace of civil power and the truncheon of the field-officers) are both derived from hence. A mayor, he says, received his name from this May, in the sense of lawful power; the crown, a symbol of dignity like the mace and sceptre, was taken from the garland or crown hung at the top of the May, the arches which sprung from the circlet and met together at the maund, or round bell, being necessarily so formed to suspend it from the top of the pole.

"The Mayings," says Strutt, in his Sports and Pastimes, published so lately as 1801, "are in some sort yet kept up by the milkmaids at London, who go about the streets with their garlands and music, dancing;" but even this faint shadow of the original sports has subsequently faded away, so that the green glories and flowery festivities of May-day only survive, if the grim show may not rather be deemed a posthumous and spectral pageant, in the saturnalia of the chimney-sweeping imps, who, with daubed visages, and bedizened in tinsel trumpery, hop around a faded Jack-in-the-green, to the dissonant clatter of their shovels and brushes. Sad and sooty spectacle! art thou indeed all that is left to us of the pristine May-day glories, and the merry pipe and tabor, and the blithe dances of the young men and damsels around the garlanded May-pole? It is even so; we can now only send our thoughts into the green woods, and go a Maying with our memories.

Rogation Sunday, the fifth after Easter, obtained its name from the succeeding Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, called Rogation days, from the Latin word *rogare*, to beseech, which were first instituted by Mammertus, Archbishop of Vienne, in Dauphiné, about the year 469, in order to procure by these supplications deliverance from the earthquakes, fires, and wild beasts wherewith the city had been afflicted. Hence the whole week is called Rogation week. The singing of litanies along the streets during this week, accompanied with processions, continued till the Reformation. At this period, as is still practised in some places, were made the parochial perambulations, to fix the bounds and limits of the parish; a custom derived from the heathen feast dedicated to the god Terminus, the guardian of the fields and landmarks. One of our church homilies is com-

posed particularly for this ceremony, which we read in the life of the pious Hooker—"He would by no means omit persuading all, both rich and poor, if they desired the preservation of love and their parish rites and liberties, to accompany him in his perambulation; when he would usually express more pleasant discourse than at other times, and would then always drop some loving and facetious observations to be remembered against the new year, especially by the boys and young people."*

Whitsuntide, or the feast of Pentecost, is compounded of the words *white* and *Sunday*, because the converts newly baptized appeared from Easter to Whitsuntide in white. The following lines in Googe's translation of Naogeorgus record one of the customs of the day:

> On Whitsunday, white pigeons tame in strings from heaven fly,
> And one that framed is of wood still hangeth in the skie;
> Thou seest how they with idols play, and teach the people to;
> None otherwise than little gyrles with puppets use to do."

Mr. Fosbrooke remarks that this feast was celebrated in Spain with representations of the gift of the Holy Ghost, and of thunder from engines which did much damage. Water, oak-leaves, burning torches, wafers, and cakes were thrown down from the church-roof; pigeons and small birds with cakes tied to their legs were let loose; and a long censer was swung up and down. Our Whitsun-ales were derived from the *agapai*, or love-feasts, of the early Christians. For this purpose voluntary contributions were made, with which the churchwardens purchased malt, bread, and a quantity of ale, which they sold out in the church or elsewhere. The profits, as well as those derived from the games of dancing, bowling, shooting at butts, and the fool or jester, there being then no poor-rates, were given to the poor, who were thus provided for according to the Christian rule, that all festivities should be rendered innocent by alms. Greenwich, its fair, and the gambols of its far-famed hill, keep the frolics of Whitsuntide still fresh and vivid in the hearts of the Londoners.

Restoration Day, 29th of May, is only here noticed as affording another proof how long holydays and observances

* Walton's Lives

may survive, after the motives for their institution have ceased to operate, or even when others of a diametrically opposite tendency have sprung up. We retain an annual form of prayer to commemorate the restoration of a monarch whose reign gave him little title to the respect of posterity, and whose family was expelled by an insulted and indignant people. It is recorded of some Pagan worthy who had conferred an important service on his native town, and was desired to name his own reward, that he requested the anniversary of his death might for ever be observed as a holyday in the schools. What other service Charles II. ever conferred we know not, but our English schoolboys are at least indebted to that monarch for a sportive anniversary, and they may therefore stand excused, as they never scrutinize too closely the *rationale* of a holyday, for getting up by daybreak to gather oak-apples, and even for going to the expense of gold-leaf to bedizen them before they are stuck into their hats.

Midsummer Day.—The feast of St. John the Baptist, 24th of June, was anciently celebrated by bonfires, and by carrying lighted torches, as an emblem of St. John the Baptist, who was a burning and a shining light. Upon this occasion the people leaped through the flames with many superstitious observances, against which a canon was issued by the council of Trullus. For a typical reason, sufficiently obvious, the period of the summer solstice has been celebrated in various nations, and from the remotest antiquity by bonfires; vestiges, perhaps, of the ancient worship of Baal and Moloch. As an additional emblem of the sun, it was customary in England to bind an old wheel round about with straw and tow, to take it to the top of some hill at night, to set fire to the combustibles, and then roll it down the declivity. These ceremonies were attended with dancing and other pastimes. The many superstitious customs practised by the credulous on St. John's eve, and the marvellous virtues attributed to the plant *Hypericum pulchrum*, or St. John's wort, will scarcely repay the trouble of recording them.

St. Peter's Day, 29th of June.—Stow tells us that the rites and sports of St. John the Baptist's eve, were also used on the eve of St. Peter and St. Paul.

Lammas Day 1st of August.—The feast of St. Peter

ad vincula. For the term "Lammas" various derivations have been assigned by antiquaries, but the most plausible conjecture makes it a contraction of Lamb-mass, because on that day the tenants who held lands under the cathedral church in York which was dedicated to St. Peter *ad vincula* were bound by their tenure to bring a live lamb into the church at high mass.

Assumption of the Virgin Mary, 15th of August—a high festival of the Romish church, was observed in many places with extraordinary rejoicings and pomp of theatrical worship, in representation of the Assumption. The vast unoccupied space in our old cathedrals, for which the modern spectator is sometimes unable to account, was the theatre wherein these spectacles and shows were performed by the monks, assisted by ponderous machinery, which required a capacious area for working it. On Assumption Day it was customary to implore blessings upon herbs, plants, roots, and fruits; in allusion to which Googe, translating from Naogeorgus, has the following lines:—

> The blessed Virgin Marie's feast hath here his place and time,
> Wherein departing from the earth she did the heavens clime;
> Great bundles then of herbs to church the people fast do beare,
> The which against all hurtful things the priest doth hallow theare;
> Thus kindle they and nourish still the people's wickednesse,
> And vainly make them to believe whatsoever they expresse.
> For sundry witchcrafts by these herbs are wrought, and divers charms,
> And cast into the fire are thought to drive away all harmes.

It is amusing to see Naogeorgus condemning the ignorant people for their credulity, and yet implying his own belief in witchcraft. Thus each age laughs at the mistakes of its precursor, as each in turn will probably be laughed at by its successor.

St. Roche's Day, 16th of August.—The phrase "sound as a roach," is thought to have been derived from the legends and attributes of this saint, who devoted himself to the sick, and was deemed the patron of all who were afflicted with the plague. His festival on this day was kept like a wake, or general harvest-home, with dances in the churchyard in the evening. We have already observed, in commenting on the Jewish feast of Tabernacles, that the season of harvest seems always and every where to have been kept as a festival, to express joy and gratitude for

having gathered in the fruits of the earth. In imitation of the Jews, the heathens had their harvest-feast, in which they participated with the labourers and the servants who had assisted them in getting in the crops; the Saxons had the same custom, always setting aside a week after harvest for holydays; and our festive harvest-home is but a continuation of the ancient practice. On these occasions it was usual in the popish times to dress up a figure of corn, which was brought home from the field in a cart, the men and women dancing around it to the music of the pipe and tabor. "Harvest-home is still the greatest rural holyday in England: but our holyday-making is not what it was. Our ancestors used to burst into an enthusiasm of joy at the end of harvest, and appear even to have mingled their previous labour with considerable merrimaking, in which they imitated the equality of the earlier ages. They crowned the wheat-sheaves with flowers, they sung, they shouted, they danced, they invited each other, or met to feast, as at Christmas, in the halls of rich houses; and what was a very amiable custom, and wise beyond the commoner wisdom that may seem to lie on the top of it, every one that had been concerned—man, woman, and child—received a little present of ribands, laces, or sweetmeats."*

Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, 8th of September.—This Roman Catholic festival, which, according to Butler and other Romish writers, has been kept about a thousand years, with matins, masses, collects, processions, and other ceremonies, is still retained in the Church of England calendar and almanacs. It is observed with much pomp in Spain and Italy, and indeed generally by the *Marian* religionists, who place greater reliance on the efficiency of the Virgin's mediation than on that of our Lord himself.

Holy Rood Day, 14th of September, was instituted on account of the recovery of a large piece of the Cross, or Holy Rood, by the Emperor Heraclius, after it had been carried away on the plundering of Jerusalem, by Chosroes, king of Persia, about the year of Christ 615. It appears to have been the custom to go a nutting upon this day, which was formerly a holyday with the boys of Eton School, in order that they might go out and gather nuts, with a por-

* The Months, by Leigh Hunt

tion of which they were to make presents to the different masters. It was ordered, however, that before this leave be granted them, they should write verses on the fruitfulness of autumn, and the deadly colds, &c., of advancing winter. Holy Cross day appears in our almanacs and calendars.

Michaelmas Day, Quarter Day, 29th of September—appointed in honour of St. Michael and all the orders of angels—was always a grand festival in the Romish Church; for, as the saint from whom it was named was the only archangel, it was held proper to celebrate his anniversary with extraordinary splendour. An expositor on the Common Prayer-book tells us, that the feast of *St. Michael and all Angels* was instituted that the people may know what benefits are derived from the ministry of angels.* As heathenism has its tutelar deities for particular countries, towns, and places, so the Romanists assigned patron saints and angels, not only to these, but to professions, trades, and to each member of the human body, besides invoking separate saints against various diseases, and even making them guardians over different animals.† The custom of eating a goose on this day is usually attributed to the circumstance that Queen Elizabeth was feasting upon one on Michaelmas Day, when she received the news of the defeat of the Spanish Armada; but this only proves that the practice then prevailed, and it is known to be not only much more ancient than Elizabeth's time, but to have obtained in other countries. Antiquaries have exhausted conjecture and research upon this subject; but it seems hardly necessary to seek any other origin for the custom, than the simple fact that stubble geese are at this season in their highest state of perfection.

All Saints, 1st of November, is the festival of those saints to whom, on account of their number, particular days could not be allotted in their individual honour. It was observed, as well as its vigil on the previous one, by a feast, of which apples, nuts, and lamb's-wool were deemed indispensable ingredients.

All Souls' Day, 2d of November.—This festival, still

* Wheatley.

† Lists of each may be found in Ellis's Edition of Brand, art. *Michaelmas*.

retained in the almanac and Church of England Calendar, has been celebrated by the western churches ever since the year 998. It was observed by prayers for the dead, in remembrance of whom persons dressed in black went round the different towns, ringing a loud and dismal-toned bell at the corner of each street, every Sunday evening during the month; and calling upon the inhabitants to remember the deceased who were suffering the expiatory flames of purgatory, and to join in prayers for the repose of their souls.

Powder Plot, 5th of November.—This anniversary, observed by a strict form of prayer, and kept as a holyday at all the public offices, is a great day in the Church of England calendar. Bishop Sanderson, in one of his sermons to the people, says, "God grant that we nor ours ever live to see November the fifth forgotten, or the solemnity of it silenced!" If, by the solemnity, the good bishop simply meant the thanksgiving prayer, we might agree with him; but if he intended to recommend a preservation of the riotous processions, bonfires, and burnings in effigy on the part of the mob—and a sermon *to the people* points at this conclusion—we should venture to dissent from him. Not only are these tumultuous proceedings highly objectionable on account of the numerous accidents to which they give occasion, and the disgraceful scuffles and skirmishes with which they have so often been accompanied, but they afford a sort of sanction to Protestants for insulting, hating, and ridiculing the Catholics, a much more numerous class of Christians than themselves, and inculcate therefore a feeling of bigotry and intolerance which is in direct opposition to the spirit of Christianity. As tending to a breach of the peace, these mob revels ought to be deemed illegal; as calculated to imbitter and prolong religious differences, they ought to be made an indictable profanation. If the crimes of an individual were to afford an excuse for perpetually outraging a whole class, what sect would escape persecution? Not one; the religion of peace would be an incessant war. It is fortunate that the anniversary fooleries of this day are falling fast into desuetude. Let us hope that they will soon be utterly forgotten, or only remembered to be reprobated. Now that our Roman Catholic brethren are at length admitted to a full participation in their civil and political rights, it is high time that this

Guy Fawkes's persecution should be also discontinued, for, paltry and contemptible as it is, it generates heart-burning and hatred. Protestants and Catholics should now forget their mutual mistakes, and endeavour, by a future brotherhood in love, to make atonement for past animosity; a happy and truly Christian consummation of which dawnings may already be perceived by him who watchfully peruses the signs of the times.

Lord Mayor's Day, 9th of November.—Once a grand civic festival and pageant; the glories and triumphs of which, performed by giants, extolled by laureates, and recorded by historians, are but dimly shadowed forth in the comparatively meager pomp of modern celebrations.

Martinmas, 11th of November, takes its name from "the great St. Martin, the glory of Gaul," who lived in a rock at Tours, and fed upon nothing but roots, a diet which the observers of his festival have by no means thought proper to imitate. At this period it was customary to kill the cattle, which were cured for the winter, during which fresh provisions were seldom or never to be had—a circumstance that afforded excuse for holding a sort of secondary carnival. The entrails of the slaughtered animals, filled with a kind of pudding meat, were formed into sausages and black puddings, of which a great feast was made, particularly in Germany, a country that has still retained its fame for the manufacture of these savoury edibles. The feast of St. Martin is a day of debauch upon the continent, the sausages and other viands being washed down with the new wines which are then begun to be tasted.

Christmas.—The author of the "Convivial Antiquities" says, that as the heathens had their Saturnalia in December, their Sigillaria in January, and the Lupercalia and Bacchanalia in February, so among Christians the interval between the Nativity and the Epiphany is devoted to feastings and revellings of all kinds. New-year's gifts and changes of clothes, or mummery, are also Pagan customs of the season.

On the vigil, or preceding eve of Christmas, it was customary with our ancestors to light up candles of an uncommon size, and lay a log of wood upon the fire called a Yule-log, to illuminate the house and, as it were, turn night into day. The following occurs in Herrick's Hesperides, p. 309.

CEREMONIES FOR CHRISTMAS.

Come bring with a noise, my merry, merry boys,
The Christmas log to the firing,
While my good dame she—bids ye all be free,
And drink to your heart's desiring.

With the last yeer's brand—light the new block, and
For good success in his spending,
On your psaltries play—that sweet luck may
Come while the log is teending.

Drink now the strong beare, cut the white loafe here,
The while the meat is a shredding,
For the rare mince-pie, and the plums stand by,
To fill the paste that's a kneeding.

From Barnaby Googe's translation of Naogeorgus, we learn that the solemnities began immediately after midnight, when three masses were sung by the priests.

This done, a woodden child in clowtes is on the aultar set,
About the which both boyes and gyrles do daunce and nimbly jet;
And carrols sing in praise of Christ, and for to help them heare,
The organs aunswere every verse with sweete and solemne cheare;
The priests do rore aloude, and round about the parents stand,
To see the sport, and with their voyce do helpe them, and their hande.

The Christmas carol (derived from *cantare* to sing, and *rola*, an interjection of joy) is of very ancient date. Bishop Taylor observes, that the "Gloria in excelsis," the well-known hymn sung by the angels to the shepherds at our Lord's nativity, was the earliest Christmas carol. In former ages bishops were accustomed to sing these pious canticles among their clergy. Warton tells us, that in 1521 Wynkyn de Worde printed a set of Christmas carols. "These were festal chansons, for enlivening the merriments of the Christmas celebrity; and not such religious songs as are current at this day with the common people, under the same title, and which were substituted by those enemies of innocent and useful mirth, the puritans. The boar's head, soused, was anciently the first dish on Christmas day, and was carried up to the principal table in the hall with great state and solemnity, to the chanting of a special carol, which Wynkyn de Worde has given us in the miscellany just mentioned."* At this season it was customary for the

* Ellis's edition of Brand's Popular Antiquities, vol. i. p. 375.

chandlers to give candles to their customers, and for the bakers to present to them the yule-cake, a kind of baby or little image in paste, the origin probably of our mince-pies. Among the ancient Romans the laurel was an emblem of peace, joy, and victory; whence it has been conjectured we have taken the custom of dressing up our houses with laurel, as an emblem of joy for the victory gained over the powers of darkness, and of that peace on earth and good-will towards men which the angels sang over the fields of Bethlehem.* Other evergreens were subsequently added. The misletoe, however, as a heathenish and profane plant, appertaining to the rites of druidism, was never admitted into churches, but was hung up in kitchens, subjecting every female who passed under it to a salute from any young man who was present. The Christmas-box was a box containing the money gathered against this season, that masses might be said by the priests to obtain forgiveness for the debaucheries committed by the people. Servants had the liberty to collect box-money, that they too might be enabled to pay the priest for his masses; knowing well the truth of the proverb—"No penny, no paternosters." Hence our modern Christmas-boxes.

"Our ancestors"—we quote from a paper in The World, No. 104—"considered Christmas in the double light of a holy commemoration and a cheerful festival; and accordingly distinguished it by devotion, by vacation from business, by merriment and hospitality. They seemed eagerly bent to make themselves and every body about them happy. The great hall resounded with the tumultuous joys of servants and tenants, and the gambols they played served as amusement to the lord of the mansion and his family, who, by encouraging every act conducive to mirth and entertainment, endeavoured to soften the rigour of the season, and mitigate the influence of winter." The hobby-horse, the

* Ellis's edition of Brand's Popular Antiquities, vol. i. p. 375. That we might not encumber our page, we have only occasionally stated our authorities for these brief holyday notices. They have been principally Brand's Popular Antiquities, edited by Ellis; Strutt's Sports and Pastimes; Malcolm's Customs of London; Fosbrocke's British Monachism; Douce's Illustrations of Shakspeare; and Hone's Every-day Book; to which latter, a work equally replete with information and amusement, the reader who wishes to see the subject more fully illustrated may refer without fear of disappointment.

mummeries, the morris-dancers, the lord of misrule, with other merry sports and pastimes that gave a zest to the feast, and accelerated the circulation of the wassail-bowl, at this the greatest festival of the year, will be hereafter more particularly noticed.

As usual in most of our festivals, the edible and potable celebrations have survived all the others, or constitute the sole portions that are observed with any of the ancient zeal. These accessories have in fact become principals. The waits, or watchmen, who sounded the watch, and perambulated the streets during winter to prevent depredation, have nominal descendants, who may still be occasionally though rarely heard, stealing pleasantly upon the midnight silence, and startling the drowsy ear with the sweetness of their dreamlike and mysterious melody; but these invisible minstrels of the Nativity, lacking an appropriate *echo* to their silver sounds, will, it is to be feared, soon follow into oblivion the lord of misrule, the abbot of un-reason, the morris-dancers, the hobby-horse, and other by-gone functionaries of the Christmas pantomime. Mince-pies, however, still maintain a savoury remembrance in our mouths; but the boar's head, holding with its teeth a lemon for its own seasoning—once the symbol of good cheer, and the favourite sign of taverns and cooks'-shops—has been dethroned from its eminence, and has long ceased to crown the festive board. It has been superseded by the turkey; which, being introduced about the time of the Reformation, became connected with the new observances of the reformed religion, without any other apparent claim than that it attains its fattest and most luxurious state about the time of Christmas. From an historical account of Norwich, we learn that between Saturday morning and Sunday night of Christmas, 1793, one thousand seven hundred turkeys, weighing nine tons two cwt., were sent from that single town to London, and two days after half as many more.

Let the external decorations and the superficial forms of this anniversary fade and fall into desuetude, or be replaced with newer glories, as fashion and caprice may dictate; but let not the spirit of Christmas, at once holy and festive, ever evaporate from our feelings, or be chilled by a non-observance of this happy season. Let the laurel—the symbol of peace and good-will—be green in our hearts, though it no

longer adorn our parlours. A proper observance of the prescribed religious duties, hospitality and social brotherhood; an interchange of love—promoting presents; the festive board; the blazing fire; the moderate bowl, enlivened by music, wit, and song; the harmless sports and pastimes for which none are too old who find a reflected pleasure from delighting the young, or who can renew, even for a single evening, the pleasant memories of their own childhood; but above all, that enlarged philanthropy which prompts us to look beyond our own circle of smiling faces, and to light up a similar gladness in the cottages of the poor by seasonable acts of charity—these are the observances which every man, to the extent of his ability, is strictly bound to maintain; for they constitute the noblest way in which a Christian can commemorate the Founder of that religion which inculcates universal love.

Of the festivals and holydays prescribed by our ancient ritual we have only noticed a portion. Most of these had their vigil, or previous eve, which was celebrated with festive observances; so that when we add to this long list the numerous wakes and fairs, and merrimakings, of which we catch frequent glimpses through the mist of antiquity, we are apt to think that mankind, at least in the lower orders, were much happier then than they are now, an impression which often prompts us to give vent to our feelings by an enthusiastic eulogy of "the good old times." This golden age, however, can only be found in chronology, when we shall have fixed the exact spot occupied by Plato's Atlantis, or Sir Thomas More's Utopia. Our old Christmas gambols and tumultuous revelries, like the Saturnalia, from which they were borrowed, were only destined to reconcile the people to their habitual wretchedness and degradation by a short season of riot. They derived their great attraction from the poverty and privation of the inferior classes, who rarely tasted fresh meat in the summer; while in the winter their best fare was salted ling and other coarse fish, which even in noblemen's families formed the ordinary diet of the servants. The greater the hardships and oppressions of life the more intense is the delight of their transient forgetfulness, whether it proceed from the drunkenness of the bowl, or the intoxication of holyday mirth. The Christmas turkeys, the roast-beef, the plum-pudding, nay, even the

vegetables, were once rarities and expensive luxuries, which were coveted with an avidity, and enjoyed with a delight, commensurate with their cost and scarcity. Most of these, except to the abjectly poor, are now within reach of at least occasional procurement, and their great attraction has vanished since they ceased to be dainties of rare occurrence.

If our humbler classes be incalculably superior to their predecessors in the essential comforts of food, clothing, fuel, and lodging, their advantages are still more distinctly marked with reference to intellectual gratifications. Theatres, reading-rooms, newspapers, magazines, reviews, novels, and mechanics' institutions, which the diffusion of education enables all ranks to enjoy, have substituted for occasional fooleries and mummeries, and stated periods of public revelry, domestic habitual fireside recreations of an infinitely higher order, and not less delightful, because they are not periodically obtruded upon our attention. The industrious operative, who can now command these every-day comforts as a right, earned by his honest exertions, wants not the frantic extravagance of the carnival, and scorns to depend for his enjoyments either upon gratuitous holydays, or eleemosynary feastings. A fortnight's frolic he would disdain to accept with a twelvemonth's subjection. He knows that he is no longer a vassal or a serf; and this very feeling of independence is a perpetual feast to his heart, worth all that were ever celebrated or registered even in the overloaded calendar of the Romanists

CHAPTER XII.

Field Sports.

"The wood resounds to hear the hounds,
Hey, nony, nony-no,
The rocks report this merry sport,
Hey trolilo, trololilo.
The hunt is up—the hunt is up,
Sing merrily we—the hunt is up.

Then hie apace unto the chase,
Hey, nony, nony-no,
While every thing doth sweetly sing,
Hey trolilo, trololilo.
The hunt is up—the hunt is up,
Sing merrily we—the hunt is up."
Old Song.

FIELD sports are, perhaps, the most ancient of all bodily exercises. Upon this point the holy Scripture agrees with the fabulous traditions of the poets, for it tells us that Nimrod was a "mighty hunter before the Lord," and it is worthy of remark, that he was the first who oppressed and enslaved his own species. Hunting, proscribed in the book of Moses, is apotheosised in the Pagan theology, under the special patronage of Diana. In the early ages of the world, it was a necessary labour of self-defence, rather than a pastime. To protect the flocks, herds, and crops from the ravages of those beasts which were in a state of natural hostility to man was a measure of the first urgency. Some of these wild animals supplied a wholesome food, the skins of nearly all were valuable for clothing, and thus interest soon began to add new incentives to the task of hunting. By the law of their nature the different species destroyed one another, and man destroyed them all, availing himself for this purpose of the advantages ensured to him by the possession of reason, and calling to his assistance all the resources of art. Every nation has practised hunting; but it has invariably been addicted to it in exact proportion to the want of civilization. With barbarians it is a business,

on which they often depend for food and necessaries; in a more advanced state of society, when this excuse no longer exists, and when it is solely directed against inoffensive creatures, it becomes a wanton cruelty.

Among the ancients, whose paramount object was to adapt themselves to the violent times in which they lived, by all such pursuits as might accustom them to the fatigues and the stratagems of war, field sports were deemed an honourable and useful exercise. Xenophon, not less distinguished as a soldier than as a philosopher, has not thought it beneath him to write a minute treatise on this subject, in which he enlarges upon its advantages in promoting courage, strength, and swiftness, in inuring the body to hardships and privations, while it habituates the mind to perseverance, and the final conquest of all difficulties and impediments. Opinions, however, upon this subject varied at different epochs, both with the Greeks and Romans. In the time of Sallust hunting was held in sovereign contempt, and his martial countrymen, so far from thinking it of an ennobling and warlike nature, and therefore fit to be restricted to the aristocracy, abandoned the pursuit to their slaves.

According to natural right, all men are equally entitled to participate in field sports, in acknowledgment of which inherent right it seems to have been an established maxim in the early ages of the world, that the property of such things as had no masters, such as beasts, birds, and fishes, was vested in those who could first secure them. The civil right of each nation to modify the law of nature imposed certain restrictions on this unlimited privilege. Solon forbade hunting to the Athenians, because it enticed them away from more useful pursuits; but this enactment was subsequently abrogated. By the Roman law game was never deemed an exclusive property; every man might sport, either over his own land or his neighbour's, but in the latter case it was necessary to obtain permission.

When the Roman empire was overrun by the Goths and Vandals, these illiterate barbarians, bringing with them a stronger taste for field sports, and having no other resource to beguile the tedium of peace and inoccupation, after they had secured their conquests, began to appropriate the privilege of hunting to their own chiefs and leaders, and, instead of a natural right, to make it a royal one. Thus it con-

tinues to this day, the right of hunting belonging only to the king and those who derive it from him. That this monstrous usurpation and the ruthless regulations by which it is supported should originate with barbarians need excite little surprise; that so sanguinary an oppression should be retained in an era claiming to be enlightened, and by people professing to be Christians, is an anomaly that proves how completely some of our antiquated Gothic institutions are at variance with the spirit of the age, and the general state of civilization.

Hunting constituted an essential part of the education of a young English nobleman so early as the ninth century, and probably long before it. Although it had not been thought necessary to teach Alfred the Great his letters before he was twelve years of age, we learn from his biographer that he was already "a most expert and active hunter, and excelled in all the branches of that most noble art." When his grandson, Athelstan, had obtained a signal victory over Constantine, King of Wales, he imposed upon him a yearly tribute of gold, silver, and cattle, to which was added a certain number of hawks, "and sharp-scented dogs fit for hunting of wild beasts." Deriving their origin from the same source as the Saxons, the Danes evinced a similar predilection for the pleasures of the chase; and Canute imposed several restrictions upon the pursuit of game, which were equally severe and unprecedented. During the short restoration of the Saxons, field sports maintained their ascendency. Edward the Confessor, though he was more of a monk than a monarch, "took the greatest delight to follow a pack of swift hounds in pursuit of game, and to cheer them with his voice."* He was equally pleased with hawking, and every day after Divine service he spent his time in one or other of these favourite pastimes. Harold, his successor, rarely travelled without his hawk and his hounds, which, indeed, were the usual companions of a nobleman at this period.

But it was during the tyrannical government of William the Norman and his immediate successors that the game-laws assumed their most oppressive and cruel character.

* Will. Malmsbury, cap. xiii. as cited in Strutt's Sports and Pastimes, page 4.

Under the pretext of hindering the destruction of the game, but in reality to prevent popular resistance to the new government, they disarmed the people; while they reserved the exclusive right of hunting and sporting to the king, and to those on whom he should bestow it, who were only his barons, chiefs, and feudatories. This was part and parcel of the feudal system,* exercised over a conquered nation, and well adapted, perhaps, to the ferocious and ignorant victors who delighted in a sport which, by its pursuit and slaughter, bore some resemblance to war. In all feudal constitutions, the commonalty are forbidden from carrying arms, as well as from using dogs, nets, snares, or other engines for destroying the game. A law so unnatural, and one which there was such constant temptation to infringe, could only be enforced by the most sanguinary and inhuman edicts; and we find, therefore, that the Norman conqueror exercised the most horrid tyrannies, not only in the ancient forests, but in the new ones which he made by overthrowing churches and villages and depopulating whole tracts of country. To destroy any of the beasts of chase within the wide limits of these royal hunting grounds was as penal as the death of a man; a stag, indeed, although only kept to be killed for pastime, was deemed a much more valuable life than that of a peasant; and even the dogs of the poor obtained more lenient treatment than their owners. All those found in the royal chases, except such as belonged to privileged persons, were simply subject to be maimed, by having the left claw cut from their feet, unless they were redeemed by a fine. In extension of this usurped right of royalty, King John laid a total interdict upon the *winged* as well as the *four-footed* creatures: *capturam avium par totam Angliam interdixit*, says Matthew Paris. By the charters extorted from this odious tyrant, many of the royal enclosures were disafforested or stripped of their oppressive privileges, while the general regulations touching the *feræ naturæ* were considerably modified in their severity. Such was the worthy origin of our game-laws, whereof enough still remains to make them a demoralizing curse to the commonalty, and a crying shame to the legislature.

* Some of the tenants held their lands upon condition of finding men to beat the country, and attend the lord when he went out on a hunting excursion.

The despotism of the monarch in all that bore relation to field sports soon began to be imitated by the nobles, on whom was devolved the royal cruelty as well as right, as we learn from a writer of the twelfth century, when the rigour of the law was somewhat abated. "In our time," says the author, "the nobility think it the height of worldly felicity to spend the whole of their time in hunting and hawking; accordingly they prepare for them with more solicitude, expense, and parade than they do for war; and pursue the wild beasts with greater fury than they do the enemies of their country. By constantly following this way of life, they lose much of their humanity, and become as savage nearly as the very beasts they hunt. Husbandmen, with their harmless herds and flocks, are driven from their well-cultivated fields, their meadows, and their pastures, that wild beasts may range in them without interruption." And he continues, addressing himself to his unfortunate countrymen; "If one of these great and merciless hunters shall pass by your habitation, bring forth hastily all the refreshment you have in your house, or that you can readily buy or borrow from your neighbours, that you may not be involved in ruin, or even accused of treason."*

"Edward III. took so much delight in hunting, that even at the time he was engaged in war with France and resident in that country, he had with him sixty couple of stag-hounds and as many hare-hounds, and every day amused himself with hunting or hawking."† Many of the great lords in the army had hounds and hawks as well as the king, and Froissart, an eye-witness of the fact, tells us that Gaston, Earl of Foix, a foreign nobleman, contemporary with King Edward, kept upwards of six hundred dogs in his castle for the purpose of hunting.

This passion for the chase soon extended itself to the clergy, the bishops and abbots of the middle ages going out to hunt in great state, with a large retinue of servants and retainers, and some of them becoming celebrated for their skill in this fashionable pursuit; a propensity for which they are frequently rebuked by contemporary poets and moralists. Chaucer, who lost no opportunity of taunting the priesthood, frequently accuses the monks of being much

* Johan. Sarisburiensis, lib. i. cap. 4. as cited by Strutt, p. 6.
† Strutt, from Froissart's Chronicle, i. cap. 210.

more addicted to riding, hunting, hawking, and blowing the horn than to the performance of their religious duties. There must have been good ground for this censure, for in the thirteenth year of Richard II. an edict prohibited any priest or other clerk *not possessing a benefice to the yearly amount of ten pounds*, from keeping a greyhound or any other dog for the purpose of hunting: neither might they use "ferrits, hayes, nets, harepipes, cords, or other engines to take or destroy the deer, hares, or rabbits, under the penalty of one year's imprisonment." This enactment was in the perfect spirit of the game-laws, for it did not affect the dignified clergy, who retained their ancient privileges, which were so extensive that Henry II., in order to restrain the prerogatives of these sporting ecclesiastics, enforced against them the canon law, by which they were forbidden to indulge in such pastimes. But these haughty and pleasure-loving priests were not to be thus baffled. In their own parks and enclosures they retained at all times the privilege of hunting, and took good care, therefore, to have such receptacles for game attached to their priories. The single see of Norwich, at the time of the Reformation, was in possession of no less than thirteen parks, well stocked with deer and other animals of chase.

It appears that some of the sporting monks of France, perhaps as a salvo to their consciences, contrived to spiritualize the chase, and to render it subservient to the purpose of teaching the ten commandments, and of eschewing the seven deadly sins. This ancient moralization is termed "Le Livre du Roy Modus, et de la Royne Ratio, lequel fait mention comment on doit deviser de toutes manieres de Chasse, &c."—Chambery, 1486—folio. To judge by the title, this work would seem simply to relate to hunting, hawking, &c., but some of the manuscript copies give, in a more ample rubric, a notion of its nature; thus—"Le Livre du Roy Modus, qui, sous les termes de la Chasse des Bestes de toute Espece, moralise les dites bestes, les dix commandemens de la loy, les sept pechés mortels, &c." Another French work is cited by Marchand, in which Christ's passion is moralized, and applied to the chase of the stag.

In former times the ladies often joined the hunting parties. Queen Elizabeth was extremely fond of the chase.

"Her majesty," says a courtier, in a letter dated the 12th of September, 1600—when she had just entered the *seventy-seventh* year of her age—"is well and excellently disposed to hunting, for every second day she is on horseback, and continues the sport long." When she visited Lord Montecute at Cowdrey, in Sussex, we are told that "Her highness tooke horse and rode into the park at eight o'clock in the morning, where was a delicate bowre prepared, under the which were her highnesses musicians placed; and a crossbow by a nymph, with a sweet song, was delivered into her hands, to shoote at the deere: about some thirty in number were put into a paddock, of which number she killed three or four, and the Countess of Kildare one."*

Fitzstephen, who wrote in the reign of Henry II., says that the Londoners delighted themselves with hawks and hounds, for they had the liberty of hunting in Middlesex, Hertfordshire, all Chilton, and in Kent to the waters of Grey: but towards the close of the sixteenth century these exercises seem to have been discontinued, not for want of taste for the amusement, says Stow, but of leisure to pursue it. Strype, however, so late as the reign of George I., reckons among the modern amusements of the Londoners "Riding on horseback and hunting with my lord mayor's hounds, when the common hunt goes out."† Of these venatorial glories of the citizens nothing more remains but the Easter Monday stag-hunt in Epping Forest, and the civic officer who still retains the functionless name of Mr. Common Hunt.

According to the ancient books of the practice of sportsmen, the seasons for hunting were as follows: The time of grace begins at Midsummer, and lasteth to Holyrood-day (14th of September). The fox may be hunted from the Nativity to the Annunciation of our Lady (25th of March), the roebuck from Easter to Michaelmas; the roe from Michaelmas to Candlemas (2d of February); the hare from Michaelmas to Midsummer; the wolf, as well as the fox, and the bear, from the Nativity to the Purification of our Lady (2d of February).

The birds and animals that were specifically interdicted as game varied according to the caprice of the legislators.

* Nichols's Progresses, vol. ii.
† Strutt's Sports and Pastimes, p. 13.

In Scotland the last act of the prohibitory kind before the accession of James to the English crown is found in 1690. It is remarkably minute, and describes by name nineteen sorts of game, which are neither to be bought nor sold, on penalty of one hundred pounds. It closes with a limitation as to the time of beginning "to eat moor poute, or partridge poute."

CHAPTER XIII.

Field Sports:—Hawking, Archery.

"A thousand vassals muster'd round,
With horse and hawk, and horn and hound;
And I might see the youth intent
Guard every pass with crossbow bent;
And through the brake the rangers stalk,
And falc'ners hold the ready hawk;
The startled quarry bounds amain
As fast the gallant greyhounds strain;
Whistles the arrow from the bow,
Answers the arquebuse below;
While all the rocking hills reply
To hoop-clang, hound, and hunters' cry,
And bugles ringing lightsomely."
Scott's Marmion.

As hawking can never have been adopted from necessity, or in self-defence, like hunting, it is of course much less ancient. Many ages would doubtless elapse before it was discovered that this species of bird could be trained to pursue and catch game, and the practice therefore does not lay claim to any very remote antiquity. Pliny alludes to something of the sort as having prevailed in Thrace, but his meaning is too obscure to allow us to decide that it was hawking, according to modern notions of that pastime. Where it was first exercised is not exactly known, nor at what precise era it came into vogue; but it is mentioned by a Latin writer of the fourth century, and is affirmed by some to have been borrowed by the Romans from the Britons, as early as the reign of Vespasian. About the middle of the eighth century, Boniface, Archbishop of Mons, who was

himself a native of England, presented to Ethelbert, King of Kent, one hawk and two falcons; and a king of the Mercians requested the same Boniface to send him two falcons that had been trained to kill cranes; so that at this period the art must have been better understood in France than in England. Harold, afterward King of England, is painted going on a most important embassy with a hawk on his hand, and a dog under his arm; and even females of distinction were occasionally thus represented, as we know from an ancient sculpture in the church of Milton Abbas, in Dorsetshire, where the consort of King Athelstan appears with a falcon in her fist tearing a bird. The Welsh had a saying in very early times, that you may know a gentleman by his hawk, horse, and greyhound. Alfred the Great, who is commended for his proficiency in this, as in all other fashionable amusements, is said to have written a treatise upon the subject, which, however, has not come down to us; from various other sources, nevertheless, we are enabled to assert, that the pastime continued to be in high favour to the end of the Saxon era.

In France hawking seems to have been prosecuted with more ardour, and sustained with still greater state and ceremony than in England. From the capitularies of the eighth and ninth centuries we learn that the *grand fauconnier* was an officer of great eminence; his annual salary was 4000 florins, he was attended by fifty gentlemen and fifty assistant falconers, was allowed to keep three hundred hawks, licensed every vender of those birds, and received a tax upon all that were sold. We have recorded the number of hounds that our Edward III. carried with him when he invaded France, and we may now add, on the same authority (Froissart), that he had besides thirty falconers on horseback, who had charge of his hawks; and that every day he either hunted or went to the river to hawk, as his fancy inclined him. From the frequent mention of hawking by the waterside, in the writers of the middle ages, we may conclude that the pursuit of aquatic fowl afforded the most diversion. Falconry appears to have been carried to great perfection, and to have been extensively pursued in the different countries of Europe about the twelfth century, when it was the favourite amusement not only of kings and nobles, but of ladies of distinction, and of the clergy, who

attached themselves to it not less zealously than they had done to hunting, although it was equally included in the prohibiting canons of the church.* For several ages no person of rank was represented without the hawk upon his hand, as an indisputable criterion of station and dignity; the bird of prey, no inappropriate emblem of nobility in the feudal ages, was never suffered to be long absent from the wrist. In travelling, in visiting, in affairs of business, or of pleasure, the hawk remained still perched upon the hand, which it stamped with distinction. A German writer of the fifteenth century severely reprobates the indecency of his countrymen in bringing their hawks and hounds into the churches, and interrupting Divine service. The passage is thus translated by Alexander Barclay:

> Into the church then comes another sotte,
> Withouten devotion jetting up and down,
> For to be seene, and showe his garded cote.
> Another on his fiste a sparhawke or fawcone,
> Or else a cokow, wasting so his shone;
> Before the aulter he to and fro doth wander,
> With even as great devotion as doth a gander;
> In comes another, his houndes at his tayle,
> With lynes and leases, and other like baggage;
> His dogges bark; so that withouten fayle,
> The whole church is troubled by their outrage.

To part with the hawk, indeed, even in circumstances of the utmost extremity, was deemed highly ignominious. By the ancient laws and capitularies of France, a knight was forbidden to give up his sword and his hawk, even as the price of his ransom. These two articles were too sacred to be surrendered, although the liberty of their owner depended upon them. Another proof of the high estimate attached to the bird of prey is the singular punishment denounced against those who should dare to steal one: *Si quis acceptorem alienum involare præsumpserit, aut sex uncias carnis acceptor ipse super testones comedat, aut certè, si noluerit, sex solidos illi cujus acceptor est, cogatur exsolvere, mulctæ autem nomine solidos duos.*

* "In the reign of Edward III. the Bishop of Ely excommunicated certain persons for stealing a hawk that was sitting upon her perch in the cloisters of Bermondsey, in Southwark; but this piece of sacrilege was committed during Divine service in the choir, and the hawk was the property of the bishop."—*Strutt*, vol. i. p. 34.

In the fields and open country hawking was followed on horseback; and on foot when in the woods and coverts. In the latter case it was usual for the sportsman to have a stout pole with him to assist him in leaping over rivulets and ditches; and we learn from Hall, that Henry VIII., pursuing his hawk on foot, at Hitchen, in Hertfordshire, was plunged into a deep slough by the breaking of his pole, and would have been stifled but for the prompt assistance of one of his attendants.

How highly these birds were appreciated may be gathered not only from the severity of the laws to which we have briefly alluded, but from the prices occasionally recorded to have been given for them. At the commencement of the seventeenth century, a goshawk and tassel-hawk were sold for 100 marks, a large sum in those days. It is further said that in the reign of James I. Sir Thomas Monson gave 1000*l.* for a cast of hawks. Nor would money always command these precious birds. Federigo, the hero of Boccacio's ninth novel, although he had spent all his substance, refused to part with his favourite hawk; and when his mistress is importuned by his son to beg it of him, she replies, "How can I send or go to ask for this hawk, which I hear is the very best of the kind, and what alone maintains him in the world? Or how can I offer to take away from a gentleman all the pleasure he has in life?" The author doubtless intended to impress us with the most exalted notion of Federigo's gallantry and devotion to his mistress, when, in his inability to purchase other viands, he makes him kill and dress this favourite hawk for her entertainment, —a sacrifice for which he is represented as not being inadequately remunerated by the lady's hand and fortune. In the book of St. Alban's, the sort of birds assigned to the different ranks of persons are placed in the following order:

The eagle, the vulture, and the merloun for an emperor.
The ger-falcon, and the tercel of the ger-falcon for a king.
The falcon gentle, and the tercel gentle for a prince.
The falcon of the rock for a duke.
The falcon peregrine for an earl.
The bastard for a baron.
The sacre and the sacret for a knight.
The lanere and the laneret for an esquire.

The marlyon for a lady.
The hobby for a young man.
The goshawk for a yeoman.
The tercel for a poor man.
The sparrow-hawk for a priest.
The musket for a holy-water clerk.
The nesterel for a knave or a servant.

Exclusively of these appropriate terms for the different birds, falconry had its peculiar or slang language, which is scarcely worth the trouble of transcription. Many of its phrases, using an old device of cruelty, seem intended to conceal as far as possible the revolting inhumanity that pervaded the whole art of hawking. Thus, "to seal a duck," was to put out its eyes before it was thrown up as a lure; sometimes the eyes were only partially sealed or sewn up, allowing it still to see backwards, by which contrivance the victim is kept continually mounting, and afforded the better exercise to the hawk, and sport to the spectator. To let a hawk "plume and break" the fowl, is to suffer it to tear and mangle the live pullets on which it is fed; but we refrain here or elsewhere from entering into any detail of the barbarities too often practised in field sports of all sorts, coinciding as we do in the opinion of Boerhaave, that to teach the arts of cruelty is equivalent to committing them.

The invention of gunpowder, by which so many and such important changes were operated, had a marked effect upon hawking, the practice rapidly declining from the moment the fowlingpiece presented a more ready and certain method of procuring game, while it afforded an equal degree of air and exercise, and saved the immense expense of training and maintaining the birds. No wonder that under these circumstances the fall of falconry, which had for so many ages been the favourite pastime of the aristocracy, should be sudden and complete. Hentzner, who wrote his Itinerary, A. D. 1598, assures us that hawking was the general sport of the English nobility; at the same time most of the best treatises upon the subject were written; shortly afterward the sport was rarely practised, and in a few years more was hardly known.

The falcons or hawks that were in use in these kingdoms are now found to breed in Wales, and in North Britain and

its isles. The peregrine falcon inhabits the rocks of Caernarvonshire. The same species, with the gyrfalcon, the gentil, and the goshawk are found in Scotland, and the lanner in Ireland. In such high esteem was the Norwegian breed of hawks formerly held, that they were thought bribes worthy a king. Jeoffrey Fitzpierre gave two good Norway hawks to King John to obtain for his friend the liberty of exporting one hundred weight of cheese; and Nicholas the Dane was to give the king a hawk every time he came into England, that he might have free liberty to traffic throughout the king's dominions. Many of the nobility also held their estates under the crown by the tenure of hawks and falcons. Before we dismiss this subject, we may note that the Mews at Charing-cross are so called from the word *mew*, which in the falconer's language is the name of a place wherein the hawks are put at the moulting time, when they change their feathers. The king's hawks were kept at this place as early as the year 1377, but in the time of Henry VIII. it was converted into stables for that monarch's horses, and the hawks were removed. Latterly the Duke of St. Alban's, hereditary grand falconer, has imported hawks from Germany, and has attempted to revive "the noble art of falconry;" the expense, however, of a hawking establishment is so considerable, and the sport itself so little adapted to an enclosed country, that the example does not seem likely to be extensively followed.

Instructions in the angler's art are generally appended to the treatises upon hunting; but as even Strutt, the elaborate historian of English sports and pastimes, could not find any particulars sufficiently deviating from the modern modes of taking fish to find a place in his work, still less can they be expected in a volume like the present. The reader requiring information upon this subject may be referred to Izaak Walton, of whose favourite art, however its features may be disguised by making them wear the mask of poetry, piety, and pastoral, the present writer has little inclination to become the teacher, even if he were qualified for the task.

ARCHERY.

From the moment when the flocks and wild animals fled at the approach of man, there was felt an urgent need of

some weapon which, without danger or fatigue to the hunter, should enable him to outstrip the fleetest and destroy the most formidable of the roving quadrupeds. Necessity is the mother of invention: every tree would supply a bow and arrow, the entrails of beasts furnished a string, and thus was procured a rude instrument of destruction, which was doubtless the first ever wielded by man, unless the club and the stone may be termed weapons. In the total absence of records for fixing the era of so remote a discovery, the fabulists and poets have, as usual, been prodigal of conjectures and assertions. Different classical writers assign the honour of the invention to Apollo, who is certainly the most renowned bowman of antiquity; to Perses, the son of Perseus; and to Scythes, the son of Jupiter, the founder of the Scythian kingdoms, in some parts of which the bow remains in use as a warlike weapon even at the present time. A Latin poet not only attributes the first invention of these arms to the example of the quill-darting porcupine, but in the flights of his fancy is enabled to trace to the same source the well-known Parthian mode of warfare. However baseless may be his theory, his description of the porcupine is sufficiently imaginative to justify a short extract:

> ——————Stat corpore toto
> Silva minax, jaculisque rigens in prælia crescit;
> Picturata seges——————
> ——————crebris propugnat jactibus ultro.
> Interdum fugiens Parthorum more sequentem
> Vulnerat. Interdum, positis velut ordine castris,
> Terrificum densa mucronem verberat unda;
> Et consanguineis hastilibus asperat armos.
> * * * * quidquid procùl appetit hostem
> Hinc reor inventum; morem hinc traxisse Cydonas
> Bellandi, Parthosque, retro didicisse ferire
> Prima sagittiferæ pecudis documenta secutos.
> *Claudian*, p. 236.

Unfortunately for this ingenious theory, it is now ascertained that the porcupine has no such projectile power as has been vulgarly bestowed upon it, the quills never being detached except at the time of moulting, when they are propelled from the body with a slight jerk. Conjectures upon a subject buried in such a dense obscurity are but a waste of time. It is sufficient to state that the bow was the most ancient and the most common of all weapons. Ishmael, we are told, became a wanderer in the desert, and

an archer: so were the heroes of Homer; and the warriors of every age and country have been acquainted with the use of similar arms.

At what time this instrument was first brought into England we have no means of determining; but there is reason to conclude that it was not used by the Britons at the time of Julius Cæsar's invasion, since it is not enumerated among the arms of the natives, in the minute description of them given by that author. From the second book of the Commentaries we know that Cæsar had both Numidian and Cretan archers in his army, when he encountered the Belgæ in Gaul; and it is therefore reasonable to suppose that he made use of the same troops when in Britain, about two years afterward, and thus first introduced the bow and arrow into our island as an instrument of war, of which the Romans continued the use until their final departure about the year 448. If the poems of Ossian, who is supposed to have lived about three centuries after Cæsar, may be cited as any authority, we shall perceive that the bow was then formed of yew, and was constantly wielded by the northern warriors and hunters. "Go to thy cave, my love, till our battle cease on the field. Son of Leith, bring the bows of our fathers! the sounding quiver of Morni! Let our three warriors bend the yew."*

About the year 449, when the Saxons came to the assistance of the Britons, they are said to have brought with them both the long and the crossbow; and during the Heptarchy we find that Offrid, son of Edwin, King of Northumbria, was killed by an arrow in a battle which was fought about the year 633, near Hatfield in Yorkshire. Excepting this fact, little relating to the bow appears in our annals of the Saxon era; but their successors, the Danes, were great archers. Alfred the Great, when concealed in the peasant's cottage, suffered the cakes to burn while he was preparing his bow, arrows, and other warlike instruments; and Polydore Virgil, speaking of the troops commanded by Alfred, says a great number of archers were placed in the right wing of the army. This weapon, therefore, must have been long established in the island; and yet some of our historians tell us that at the battle of Hastings the English were

* Vol. i. p. 120.

entirely ignorant of the effect of archery, and were struck with astonishment at finding death inflicted upon them, while the enemy were yet at a distance. Speed observes that the first discharge of arrows from the Norman army "was a kind of fight both strange and terrible unto the English, who supposed their enemy had been already even in the middest among them." Echard expresses the same sentiment, adding that the Norman *long-bow* was a weapon then unused in England. Sir J. Hayward* says, that this instrument was first brought into the land by the Normans, and that afterward the English, being trained to the practice of it, became the best shooters in the world. Ross, in his Chronicle, confirms the former part of this statement.†

Under the Norman government the practice of archery was not only much improved but generally diffused throughout the kingdom. We meet, however, no circumstance appertaining to it worthy of particular record until the time of Henry II., in whose reign archery seems to have been first carried into Ireland, and to have been employed with such effect against the natives, that it mainly contributed to the English conquests. At this period the Welsh were the most formidable wielders of the long-bows, of which Giraldus Cambrensis cites several instances, some of them curious enough to excuse an extract, though the reader may perhaps think that the historian is himself using the weapon he describes. "During a siege," says this ancient writer, "it happened that two soldiers running in haste towards a tower situated at a little distance from them, were attacked with a number of arrows from the Welsh; which being shot with prodigious violence, some penetrated through the oak doors of a portal, although they were the breadth of four fingers in thickness. It happened also in a battle at the time of William de Breusa (as he himself relates), that a Welshman having directed an arrow at a horse-soldier of his who was clad in armour, and had his leather coat under it, the arrow, besides piercing the man through the hip, struck also through the saddle, and mortally wounded the horse on which he sat. Another Welsh soldier having

* History of the Norman Kings.

† Moseley gives the following quotation: "Ipse (Willielmus) usum longorum arcuum et sagittarum in Angliam primus inducebat, cum eis Angliam conquestione vincens."—*Chron. J. Rossi*, p. 109.

shot an arrow at one of his horsemen, who was covered with strong armour in the same manner as the before-mentioned person, the shaft penetrated through his hip, and fixed in the saddle; but what is most remarkable is, that as the horseman drew his bridle aside in order to turn round, he received another arrow in his hip on the opposite side, which passing through it, he was firmly fixed to the saddle on both sides."* Of the great power and precision with which arrows may be discharged we have better evidence than is afforded by the questionable exploits of William Tell, Robin Hood, and the marvellous archer recorded in D'Herbelot's Bibliothéque Orientale: "qui tira une fleche du haut de la montagne de Damavend, jusque sur les bords du fleuve Gihon." Lord Bacon says, "The Turkish bow giveth a very forcible shoot, inasmuch as it hath been known that the arrow hath pierced a steel target, or a piece of brass, of two inches thick!"—*Nat. Hist. Exp.* 704, vol. iii. Mr. Barrington, in his Essay inserted in the Archæologia, relates a tradition that one Leigh, an attorney at Wigan in Lancashire, shot an arrow a mile at three flights. This surpasses the feat of the Turkish ambassador who, in the fields near London, and in the presence of Mr. Strutt, shot an arrow with a round wooden head upwards of four hundred and eighty yards from the standing. Carew, speaking of the Cornish archers two centuries back, says, that the butts for long shooting were usually placed at a distance of four hundred and eighty yards, adding that their cloth-yard shafts would pierce any ordinary armour.

It is uncertain whether the arrow which proved fatal to William Rufus were discharged from a long-bow or cross-bow, but both were in extensive use at the battle of Cressy, on which occasion the latter was used by a large body of Genoese soldiers who fought on the side of the French; but the strings of their arbalists, being relaxed by a heavy storm which happened just before the engagement, were rendered nearly unfit for service, while the English long-bows, being kept in their cases during the rain, did not receive the smallest injury.† From a passage in Stow, we find that Richard II.

* The original Latin of this marvellous passage is given in Moseley's Essay on Archery, p. 223.

† Bayle, explaining the difference between testimony and argument, draws an admirable illustration from these two weapons. "Testimony,"

had a numerous guard of archers; for, in the year 1397, as the members were one day leaving the parliament-house, "a great stir was made as was usual; whereupon the king's archers, in number four thousand, compassed the parliament-house, thinking there had been some broil or fighting, with their bows bent, their arrows notched, and drawing ready to shoot, to the terror of all that were there: but the king coming pacified them." In the battle gained over the Scots at Hallidown Hill, in the year 1402, the historian tells us that "the Lord Percie's archers did withall deliver their deadly arrowes so lively, so couragiously, so grievously, that they raune through the men-of-armes, bored their helmets, pierced their very swords, beat their lances to the earth, and easily shot those who were more slightly armed through and through."

The signal victory of Agincourt, in 1415, is equally ascribed to the English archers, who destroyed a great number of French cavalry by their yard-long arrows; and this seems to be the last important action that was decided by the use of archery. Gunpowder since its first invention had been confined to cannon, of which Edward is said to have had four pieces at the battle of Cressy; but small arms, first brought into use by the Venetians in 1382, were soon rapidly diffused throughout Europe, and archery, although it continued in our armies during several succeeding reigns, was at length cultivated more as an amusement than for real military service. Although it is in this point of view that it falls more immediately within the scope of our work, it will naturally present to us fewer materials worthy of record than when, by deciding the fate of mighty battles, it arrested the attention of historians and annalists. It appears to have been a fashionable sport during the reign of Henry VIII., who, we are told by Hollinshead, shot as well as any of his guard. Edward VI. and Charles I. are known to have been fond of this exercise, which retained its attractions during the succeeding reigns, and was occasionally sustained by the presence and practice of the sovereign. The artillery company, or Finsbury archers, revived in 1610, retained the use of the bow as well as their place of exer-

he says, "is like the shot of a long-bow, which owes its efficacy to the force of the shooter; argument is like the shot of the crossbow, equally forcible whether discharged by a dwarf or a giant."

cise. So lately as the year 1753, targets were erected in the Finsbury fields, during the Easter and Whitsun holydays, when the best shooter was styled captain for the ensuing year, and the second, lieutenant. Towards the close of the late century, archery again started into sudden favour as an amusement, and numerous companies were formed, which, after being maintained with great zeal for a short time, yielded in a few years to the caprices of fashion, and have now, we believe, with some few exceptions, totally disappeared.*

"The exact time in which the bow became disused in war by the English army cannot, perhaps, be fixed. P. Daniel mentions that arrows were shot by the English at the Isle of Rhé, in 1627. Mr. Grose informs us, that in 1643 the Earl of Essex issued a precept "for stirring up all well-affected people by benevolence, towards the raising of a company of archers for the service of the king (Charles I.) and the parliament." "And in a pamphlet," says the same author, "which was printed anno 1664, giving an account of the Marquis of Montrose against the Scots, bowmen are repeatedly mentioned."†

As an appendix to this slight historical sketch of archery, we may briefly notice a few of the statutes formed at different times for its regulation and encouragement. As early as the beginning of the twelfth century, a law freed from the charge of murder any one who, in practising with arrows or darts, should kill a person standing near. In the thirteenth century, every person not having a greater annual revenue in land than one hundred pence, was compelled to have in his possession a bow and arrows; and all such as had no possessions, but could afford to purchase arms, were

* Moseley in his Essay on Archery, published in 1792, gives the following as the principal societies then existing:

The Hon. Artillery Company.	Southampton Archers.
Royal Edinburgh.	Bowmen of Cheviot Chase.
Toxophilite.	Kentish Rangers.
Woodmen of Arden.	Woodmen of Hornsey.
Royal Kentish Bowmen.	Surrey Bowmen.
Royal British Bowmen.	Bowmen of the Border.
Robin Hood Bowmen.	Mercian Bowmen.
Loyal Archers.	Broughton Archers.
Yorkshire Archers.	Staffordshire Bowmen
Hainault Foresters.	Trent Archers.

† Moseley's Essay, p. 231.

commanded to have a bow with sharp arrows if they dwelt without the royal forests, and a bow with round-headed arrows if they resided within the forests. In the reign of Richard II. an act was made to compel all servants to shoot on Sundays and holydays. Henry IV. ordained by a law, that the heads of arrows should be well boiled and brazed, and hardened at the points with steel, under pain of forfeiture and imprisonment. Henry V. ordered the sheriffs of several counties to procure feathers from the wings of geese, picking six from each goose. In the time of Edward IV. every Englishman was ordered to provide himself with a bow of his own height, and butts were directed to be put up in every township, for the inhabitants to shoot at on feast-days. In the reign of Henry VII. the crossbow was forbidden by law to be used, and so much importance was still attached to the use of the long-bow, even so late as the 33d Henry VIII., that a statute of that date directs that all men under sixty (except spiritual men, justices, &c.) shall use shooting with the long-bow, and shall have a bow and arrow ready continually in the house. It was also enacted, that no person under the age of twenty-four should shoot at a standing mark, except it be a rover, where he may change his ground every shot. And no person above twenty-four shall shoot at any mark of eleven score yards, or under, with any prick-shaft, or flight-arrow, under pain of 6*s.* 8*d.* penalty for every shot.

Besides making laws in favour of archery, Henry VIII. instituted a chartered society for the practice of shooting, under the name of the Fraternity of St. George, at whose exercises he sometimes attended. It is said, that one day having fixed a meeting of them at Windsor, a person of the name of Barlow far outshot the rest, which pleased the king so much that he saluted him with the name of Duke of Shoreditch, of which place the man was an inhabitant.* This dignity was long preserved by the captain of the London archers, who used to summon the officers of his several divisions by the titles of Marquises of Barlow, Clerkenwell, Islington, Hoxton, Earl of Pancras, &c. Hollinshead, who wrote in the sixteenth century, laments the decay of archery in his time, and thus praises the bow-

* Bowman's Glory, p. 41.

men of King Edward's days. "In times past the chief force of England consisted in their long-bows, but now we have in a manner generally given over that kind of artillery, and for long-bows indeed do practise to shoot compass for our pastime. Cutes, the Frenchman, and Rutters, deriding our new archery in respect to their croslets, will not let, in open skirmish, to turn up their tails and cry—*shoote*, Englishmen! and all because our strong shooting is decayed and laid in bed; but if some of our Englishmen now lived that served Edward III., the breech of such a varlet should have been nailed to him with an arrow, and another feathered in his bowels."

Even so late as the reign of Elizabeth, it remained a doubt with many which was the most advantageous weapon, the matchlock or bow; a question which will not appear surprising, when we consider that the former was at that period very cumbersome in weight, and unskilful in contrivance, while archery had been carried to the highest state of perfection. Mr. Grose informs us, that an archer could formerly shoot six arrows in the time necessary to charge and discharge a musket; and even in modern days, a practised bowman has been known to shoot twelve arrows in a minute, into a circle not larger than the circumference of a man's hat, at the distance of forty yards. Sir John Hayward observes, that a horse struck with a bullet, if the wound be not mortal, may perform good service; but if an arrow be fastened in his flesh, the continual irritation produced by his own motion renders him utterly unmanageable; and he adds, that the sight of a shower of arrows is much more appalling to the soldier than the noise of artillery. Archers usually performed the duty of our sharpshooters, occupying the front, and retiring between the ranks of the heavy-armed men as the battle joined. In later times, being armed with a shield, a sword, and javelins, as well as a bow, they were not afraid to venture into the midst of the battle. Mention is made, in the reign of Edward III., of two hundred archers *on horseback;* and in the seventh year of Richard II. the bishop of Norwich offered to serve the king abroad with 3000 men-at-arms and 2500 archers, well horsed and appointed. Henry VIII.'s attendants at the meeting of the field of gold cloth were principally mounted archers, carrying their long-bows with them.

It is a mistake, in the opinion of Mr. Douce,* to suppose that yews were planted in the churchyards for the purpose of making bows, for which the more common materials were elm and hazel. It is by no means improbable, that the superstition of our ancestors planted yews in the churchyards for their supposed virtue in warding off evil spirits, or as a protection against the fury of the winds, which might otherwise injure or unroof the sacred building. Accordingly, in a statute made in the latter part of the reign of Edward I., to prevent rectors from cutting down the trees in churchyards, we find the following passage: "verum arbores ipsæ, *propter ventorum impetus, ne ecclesiis noceant, sæpe plantantur.*"

Convinced, as we are, that the practice of archery possesses in point of health and exercise all the diversion and advantages of field sports, without their cruelty to animals and demoralizing oppression to our fellow-creatures, we shall conclude our chapter with an extract from a writer in whose sentiments upon this subject we fully concur. "That archery possesses many excellences as an amusement will require little trouble to prove. It is an exercise adapted to every age and every degree of strength; it is not necessarily laborious, as it may be discontinued at the moment it becomes fatiguing; a pleasure not to be enjoyed by the hunter, who, having finished his chase, perceives that he must crown his toils with an inanimate ride of forty miles to his bed. Archery is attended with no cruelty. It sheds no innocent blood, nor does it torture harmless animals, charges of which lie heavy against some other *amusements*."

"It has been said that a reward was formerly offered to him who could invent a new pleasure. Had such a reward been held forth by the ladies of the present day, he who introduced archery as a female exercise would have deservedly gained the prize. It is unfortunate that there are few diversions in the open air in which women can join with satisfaction; and as their sedentary life renders motion necessary to health, it is to be lamented that such suitable amusements have been wanting to invite them. Archery has, however, contributed admirably to supply this

* Illustration of Shakspeare, vol. i. 396.

defect, and in a manner the most desirable that could be wished. But I do not intend to sing the praises of this elegant art in their full extent. I subjoin a wish, however, that it may be universally cultivated and approved; and may we see the time when (with Statius) it can be said, 'Pudor est nescire sagittas;' it is a reproach to be unskilful with the bow."—*Moseley's Essay on Archery*, p. 180.

CHAPTER XIV.

Bull-Fights and Baiting of Animals.

"Each social feeling fell,
And joyless inhumanity pervades
And petrifies the heart."
Thomson's Spring.

Although we have expressed an intention of restricting ourselves chiefly to the sports of our own country, we can hardly leave unnoticed a subject so celebrated and so long connected with romantic and chivalrous associations as the bull-fights. The Spaniards, who have always been the most celebrated for this cruel diversion, generally dedicated their bull-feasts to St. John, the Virgin Mary, &c., never seeming to entertain the smallest suspicion that they were desecrating the patron, instead of sanctifying the inhuman sport, by a conjunction so incongruous. According to some writers, the people of the Peninsula derived this sport from the Moors, among whom it was exhibited with great *éclat*. Dr. Plot is of opinion that the Thessalians, who first instituted the game, and of whom Julius Cæsar learned and brought it to Rome, were the origin both of the Spanish and Portuguese bull-fighting and of the English bull-baiting. In the Greek bull-fights, several of these animals were turned out by an equal number of horsemen, each combatant selecting his bull, which he never quitted till he had overpowered him. Some authors maintain, that in consequence of a violent plague at Rome, chiefly occasioned by eating bull's flesh, the Taurilia were established so early as the time of Tarquinius Superbus, who justly dedicated them to the

infernal gods. At all events, the practice maintained itself in Italy for many ages. It was prohibited by Pope Pius V., under pain of excommunication incurred *ipso facto;* but succeeding popes have granted several mitigations on behalf of the Torreadores.

From the following account of a bull-feast in the coliseum at Rome, 1332, extracted from Muratori by Gibbon, the reader may form some idea of the points, the ceremonies, and the danger which attended these exhibitions:—"A general proclamation as far as Rimini and Ravenna invited the nobles to exercise their skill and courage in this perilous adventure. The Roman ladies were marshalled in three squadrons, and seated in three balconies, which on this day, the 3d of September, were lined with scarlet cloth. The fair Jacova di Rovere led the matrons from beyond the Tiber; a pure and native race, who still represent the features and character of antiquity. The remainder of the city was divided between the Colonna and Ursini families; the two factions were proud of the number and beauty of their female bands; the charms of Savella Ursini are mentioned with praise; and the Colonna regretted the absence of the youngest of their house, who had sprained her ancle in the garden of Nero's tower. The lots of the champions were drawn by an old and respectable citizen; and they descended into the arena or pit to encounter the wild bulls, on foot, as it should seem, with a single spear. Amid the crowd our annalist has selected the names, colours, and devices of twenty of the most conspicuous knights. Several of the names are the most illustrious of Rome and the ecclesiastical state; Malatesta, Polenta, Della Valle, Cafarello, Savelli, Cappoccio, Conti, Annibaldi, Altieri, Corsi. The colours were adapted to their taste and situation; the devices are expressive of hope and despair, and breathe the spirit of gallantry and arms:—'I am alone, like the youngest of the Horatii,' the confidence of an intrepid stranger: 'I live disconsolate,' a weeping widower: 'I burn under the ashes,' a discreet lover: 'I adore Lavinia or Lucretia,' the ambiguous declaration of a modern lover: 'My faith is as pure'—the motto of a white livery: 'Who is stronger than myself?' of a lion's hide: 'If I am drowned in blood, what a pleasant death!' the wish of ferocious courage. The pride or prudence of the Ursini restrained

them from the field, which was occupied by three of their hereditary rivals, whose inscriptions denoted the lofty greatness of the Colonna name: 'Though sad, I am strong:' 'Strong as I am great:' 'If I fall (addressing himself to the spectators), you fall with me;' intimating, says the writer, that while the other families were the subjects of the Vatican, they alone were the supporters of the Capitol. —The combats of the amphitheatre were dangerous and bloody. Every champion successively encountered a wild bull, and the victory may be ascribed to the quadrupeds, since no more than eleven were left on the field, with the loss of nine wounded and eighteen killed on the side of their adversaries. Some of the noblest families might mourn, but the pomp of the funerals in the churches of St. John Lateran and St. Maria Maggiore afforded a second holyday to the people. Doubtless, it was not in such conflicts that the blood of the Romans should have been shed; yet, in blaming their rashness, we are compelled to applaud their gallantry; and the noble volunteers who display their magnificence and risk their lives under the balconies of the fair, excite a more generous sympathy than the thousands of captives and malefactors who were reluctantly dragged to the scene of slaughter."

A striking relic of barbarity in the Spanish manners of the present day is the excessive attachment of the nation to bull-fights, a spectacle which shocks the delicacy of every other people in Europe. Many Spaniards consider this practice as the sure means of preserving that energy by which they are characterized, and of habituating them to violent emotions, which are terrible only to timid minds. But it seems difficult to comprehend what relation there is between bravery and a spectacle where the assistants now run no danger; where the actors prove by the few accidents which befall them, that there is nothing in it very interesting; and where the unhappy victims meet only with certain death, as the reward of their vigour and courage. Another proof that these spectacles have little or no effect on the disposition of the mind is, that children, old men, and people of all ages, stations, and characters, assist at them, and yet their being accustomed to such bloody entertainments appears neither to correct their weakness and timidity, nor alter the mildness of their manners.

The bull-fights are very expensive, but they bring great gain to the undertakers. The worst places cost two or four rials, accordingly as they are in the sun or in the shade. The price of the highest is a dollar. When the price of the horses and bulls and the wages of the *torreadores* have been paid out of this money, the rest is generally appropriated to pious foundations; at Madrid it forms one of the principal funds of the hospital. It is only during summer that these combats are exhibited, because the season then permits the spectators to sit in the open air, and because the bulls are then more vigorous. Those which are of the best breed are condemned to this kind of sacrifice; and connoisseurs are so well acquainted with their distinguishing marks, that when a bull appears in the arena, they can mention the place where he was reared. This arena is a kind of circus, surrounded by about a dozen of seats, rising one above another, the highest of which only is covered. The boxes occupy the lower part of the edifice. In some cities, Valladolid for example, which has no place particularly set apart for these combats, the principal square is converted into a theatre; the balconies of the houses are widened so as to project over the streets which end there; and it is really a very interesting sight to see the different classes of people assembled round this square waiting for the signal when the entertainment is to commence, and exhibiting every external sign of impatience and joy. The spectacle commences by a kind of procession round the square, in which appear, both on horseback and on foot, the combatants who are to attack the fierce animal; after which two alguazils, dressed in perukes and black robes, advance with great gravity on horseback, who go and ask from the president of the entertainment an order for it to commence. A signal is immediately given; and the animal, which was before shut up in a kind of hovel with a door opening into the square, soon makes his appearance. The officers of justice, who have nothing to do with the bull, presently hasten to retire, and their flight is a prelude to the cruel pleasure which the spectators are about to enjoy.

The bull, however, is received with loud shouts, and almost stunned with the noisy expression of their joy. He has to contend first with the *vicadores*, combatants on horse-

back, who, dressed according to the ancient Spanish manner, and, as it were, fixed to their saddles, wait for him, each being armed with a long lance. This exercise, which requires strength, courage, and dexterity, is not considered as disgraceful. Formerly, the greatest lords did not disdain to practise it; even at present, some of the hidalgos solicit for the honour of fighting the bull on horseback, and they are then previously presented to the people, under the auspices of a patron, who is generally one of the principal personages at court.

The picadores, whoever they may be, open the scene. It often happens that the bull, without being provoked, darts upon them, and everybody entertains a favourable opinion of his courage; if, notwithstanding the sharp-pointed weapon which defends his attack, he returns immediately to the charge, their shouts are redoubled as their joy is converted into enthusiasm; but if the bull, struck with terror, appears pacific and avoids his persecutors by walking round the square in a timid manner, he is hooted at and hissed by the whole spectators, and all those near whom he passes load him with blows and reproaches. He seems then to be a common enemy who has some great crime to expiate; or a victim, in the sacrifice of which all the people are interested. If nothing can awaken his courage, he is judged unworthy of being tormented by men; the cry of *perros! perros!* brings forth new enemies against him, and large dogs are let loose upon him, which seize him by the neck and ears in a furious manner. The animal then finds the use of those weapons with which nature has furnished him; he tosses the dogs into the air, who fall down stunned, and sometimes mangled; they however recover, renew the combat, and generally finish by overcoming their adversary, who thus perishes ignobly. If, on the other hand, he presents himself with a good grace, he runs a longer and nobler, but a much more painful career. The first act of this tragedy belongs to the combatants on horseback: this is the most animated and bloody of all the scenes, and often the most disgusting. The irritated animal braves the pointed steel which makes deep wounds in his neck, attacks with fury the innocent horse who carries his adversary, rips up his sides and overturns him, together with his rider. The latter, then dismounted and disarmed,

would be exposed to imminent danger, did not combatants on foot, called *chulos*, come to divert the bull's attention, and to provoke him, by shaking before him pieces of cloth of various colours. It is, however, at their own risk that they thus save the dismounted horseman, for the bull sometimes pursues them, and they have need of all their agility. They often escape from him by letting fall before him the piece of stuff which was their only arms, and against which the deceived animal expends all his fury. Sometimes he does not accept this substitute, and the combatant has no other resource but to throw himself speedily over a barrier, six feet high, which encloses the interior part of the arena. In some places this barrier is double, and the intermediate space forms a kind of circular gallery, behind which the pursued torreadore is in safety. But when the barrier is single the bull attempts to jump over it, and often succeeds. The reader may easily imagine in what consternation the nearest of the spectators then are; their haste to get out of the way and to crowd to the upper benches becomes often more fatal to them than even the fury of the bull, who, stumbling at every step, on account of the narrowness of the place and the inequality of the ground, thinks rather of his own safety than revenge; and, besides, soon falls under the blows which are given him from all quarters.

Except in such cases, which are very rare, he immediately returns. His adversary, recovered, has had time to get up; he quickly remounts his horse, provided the latter is not killed or rendered unfit for service, and the attack recommences; but he is often obliged to change his horse several times. Expressions cannot then be found to celebrate these acts of prowess, which for several days become the favourite topic of conversation. The horses, very affecting models of patience, courage, and docility, may be seen treading under their feet their own bloody entrails, which drop from their sides half-torn open, and yet continuing to obey for some time the hand which conducts them to new tortures. Spectators of delicacy are then filled with disgust, which converts their pleasure into pain. A new act is however preparing which reconciles them to the entertainment. As soon as it is concluded that the bull has been sufficiently tormented by the combatants on horseback, they retire and

leave him to be irritated by those on foot. The latter, who are called *banderilleros*, go before the animal, and the moment he darts upon them they plunge into his neck, two by two, a kind of darts called *banderillas*, the points of which are hooked, and which are ornamented with small streamers made of coloured paper. The fury of the bull is now redoubled; he roars, tosses his head, and the vain efforts which he makes serve only to increase the pain of his wounds; the last scene calls forth all the agility of his adversaries. The spectators at first tremble for them, when they behold them braving the horns of this formidable animal; but their bands, well exercised, aim their blows so skilfully, and they avoid the danger so nimbly, that, after having seen them a few times, one neither pities nor admires them; and their address and dexterity seem only to be a small episode of the tragedy, which concludes in the following manner: When the vigour of the bull appears to be almost exhausted,—when his blood, issuing from twenty wounds, streams along his neck and moistens his robust sides,—and when the people, tired of one object, demand another victim, the president of the entertainment gives the signal of death, which is announced by the sound of trumpets. The *matador* then advances, and all the rest quit the arena; with one hand he holds a long dagger, and with the other a long flag, which he waves backwards and forwards before his adversary. They both stop and gaze at one another; and while the agility of the matador deceives the impetuosity of the bull, the pleasure of the spectators, which was for some time suspended, is again awakened into life. Sometimes the bull remains motionless, throws up the earth with his feet, and appears as if meditating revenge.

The bull in this condition, and the matador who calculates his motions and divines his projects, form a group which an able pencil might not disdain to delineate. The assembly, in silence, behold this dumb scene. The matador at length gives the mortal blow; and if the animal immediately falls, a thousand voices proclaim with loud shouts the triumph of the conqueror; but if the blow is not decisive, if the bull survives, and seeks still to brave the fatal steel, murmurs succeed to applause, and the matador, whose glory was about to be raised to the skies, is considered only

as an unskilful butcher. He endeavours to be soon revenged, and to disarm the judges of their severity. His zeal sometimes degenerates into blind fury, and his partisans tremble for the consequences of his imprudence. He at length directs his blows better. The animal vomits up blood; he staggers and falls, while his conqueror is intoxicated with the applauses of the people. Three mules, ornamented with bells and streamers come to terminate the tragedy. A rope is tied round the bull's horns, which have betrayed his valour, and the animal, which but a little before was furious and proud, is dragged ignominiously from the arena which he has honoured, and leaves only the traces of his blood, and the remembrance of his exploits, which are soon effaced on the appearance of his successors. On each of the days set apart for these entertainments, six are thus sacrificed in the morning and twelve in the afternoon, at least in Madrid. The last three are given entirely to the matador, who, without the assistance of the picadores, exerts his ingenuity to vary the pleasure of the spectators. Sometimes he causes them to be combated by some intrepid stranger, who attacks them mounted on the back of another bull, and sometimes he matches them with a bear: this last method is generally destined for the pleasure of the populace. The points of the bull's horns are concealed by something wrapped round them which breaks their force. The animal, which in this state is called *embolado*, has power neither to pierce nor to tear his antagonist. The amateurs then descend in great numbers to torment him, each after his own manner, and often expiate this cruel pleasure by severe contusions; but the bull always falls at length under the blows of the matador. The few spectators who are not infected with the general madness of this sport, regret that these wretched animals do not, at least, purchase their lives at the expense of so many torments and so many efforts of courage; they would willingly assist them to escape from their persecutors. In the minds of such spectators disgust succeeds to compassion. Such a series of uniform scenes satiates and exhausts that interest which the spectacle on its commencement seemed to promise. But to connoisseurs, who have thoroughly studied all the stratagems of the bull, the resources of his address and fury, and the different methods of irritating,

tormenting, and deceiving him, none of these scenes resembles another, and they pity those frivolous observers who cannot remark all their varieties.

The Spanish government are very sensible of the moral and political inconveniences arising from this species of phrensy. They have long since perceived, that among a people whom they wish to encourage to labour, it is the cause of much disorder and dissipation; and that it hurts agriculture by destroying a great number of robust animals which might be usefully employed: but they are obliged to manage with caution a taste which it might be dangerous to attempt to abolish precipitately. They are, however, far from encouraging it. The court itself formerly reckoned bull-fights among the number of its festivals, which were given at certain periods. The *Plaza Mayor* was the theatre of them, and the king and the royal family honoured them with their presence. His guards presided there in good order. His halberdiers formed the interior circle of the scene; and their long weapons held out in a defensive posture were the only barrier which they opposed against the dangerous caprices of the bull. These entertainments, which by way of excellence were called *fiestas reales*, are become very rare. Charles III., who endeavoured to polish the nation, and to direct their attention to useful objects, was very desirous of destroying a taste in which he saw nothing but inconveniences; but he was too wise to employ violent means for that purpose. He however confined the number of bull-fights to those of which the profits were applied to some charitable institutions.

Charles IV., inheriting in this respect the humane and enlightened views of his predecessor, ventured in 1805 to suppress bull-fights altogether by a royal prohibition. But before this interdict, the spirit of the age had begun to exert its influence even in the Peninsula, the last stronghold of bigotry and ignorance, and their invariable concomitant, cruelty. Commercial towns, from their greater communication with foreign nations, generally take precedence of the interior districts in knowledge, civilization, and improvement; in confirmation of which remark we may state that the great theatre for the bull-fights in Cadiz was falling to ruin when the ordinance in question was promulgated. Nevertheless, in the year 1809, when the rest of Spain was

overrun by the French, Cadiz for a short time formed the only place where this national pastime was allowed. The French, always remarkable for their humanity to animals, having interdicted this cruel sport in those provinces of the Peninsula that were subject to their sway, it could only be exhibited at Cadiz, the inhabitants of which place betook themselves to it with renewed enthusiasm, and were almost reconciled to an invasion which had thus procured for them a temporary restoration of their favourite pastime.*

CHAPTER XV.

Bull-fights and Baiting of Animals, concluded.

"And, gentle friends,
Let's kill him boldly, but not wrathfully;
Let's carve him as a dish fit for the gods,
Not hew him as a carcass fit for hounds."—*Shakspeare.*

——"Hadst thou full power to kill,
Or measure out his torments by thy will,
Yet what couldst thou, tormentor, hope to gain?
Thy loss continues unrepaid by pain."—*Dryden.*

From the preceding account our readers will have formed some general notion of the mode of conducting the bull-feasts in Spain; but as we are enabled to lay before them a more particular as well as a much more spirited and interesting description, furnished by the kindness of a literary friend, who witnessed a splendid exhibition of this nature given at Madrid to celebrate the return of King Ferdinand to his capital, we scruple not to enrich our volume with his narrative. So rare have these spectacles now become, that it is not easy to meet with a traveller who has witnessed them; and seldom, indeed, do we encounter one so well able to describe what he has seen.

"Were we to suffer our opinion of the national character of the Spaniard to be guided by the amusement which forms so prominent a feature in his pursuit of pleasure as

* This chapter has been mostly transcribed from the Encyclopædia Britannica.

the bull-fight, we should be guilty of injustice in ascribing to his general nature that barbarous brutality which characterizes an entertainment unparalleled for cruelty, except in the gladiatorial exhibitions of a Nero or a Commodus.

"This amusement bears a greater affinity to the scenes of the Coliseum than to any of the entertainments of the other principal people who successively invaded and tinctured Spain with the manners and customs of their own nations. The only argument against its Latin origin is, that in the exhibitions of the Roman circles, animals useful for domestic purposes seem generally to have been excluded from the public combats; but there are no records whatever which lead us to believe that the Goths were addicted to this species of entertainment; nor do the tournaments and other popular amusements of the Moors produce any proofs that the bull-fight is of Saracenic origin. From whatever source it originated, there never was a pursuit more completely national, or to which a people were more devoted. Neither the Olympic games of Greece, nor the boasted gladiatorial exhibitions of Rome, ever attracted a greater concourse of spectators, or created a greater degree of enthusiasm in the breasts of the Greeks and Romans, than is excited by a bull-fight in that of a Spaniard. The remains of Roman amphitheatres in various parts of Spain also corroborate the probability that this exhibition is derived from that people, and that bulls were substituted for the wild beasts, as being the most powerful and fiercest animal which the country produced.

"No trivial eagerness of anticipation was therefore evinced by the Madridianos, when the placards in the coffee-houses and the streets announced a magnificent Fiesta de Toros,* in celebration of the return of Fernando; and, from an early period of the morning destined for the enjoyment of the entertainment, every inhabitant of Madrid appeared to be bending his course towards the Puerta d'Alcala, near to which the Plaza de los Toros, or theatre, is situated. It is only by witnessing the crowds of eager beings of every denomination flocking in all directions to the same point of attraction, with anxiety depicted in their countenances, and impatience betrayed by their hasty steps, that the intensity

* Literally, bull-feast.

of a Spaniard's attachment to this national amusement can be conceived.

"Business, pleasure, and religion seem for the moment to be entirely abandoned or lost in this one predominant gratification. Neither the decrepitude of age nor the helplessness of infancy prevents its pursuit; no command of masters can deter servants; no occupation appears paramount with the master to detain him from its indulgence; and though it is impossible to aver, with Burgoing, that the chastity of many a young female has fallen a sacrifice to the temptation of witnessing a bull-fight, when all the strength of her own inclinations, and all the ardour of a lover were insufficient for his purpose, yet an attendance at one of these exhibitions is enough to convince the beholder of its being that in which the Spaniard centres his chief delight. On this morning every street in Madrid which did not form an avenue to the scene of action appeared to be as deserted as at the hour of the siesta. Most of the shops were shut; vehicles and mules adorned with gaudy trappings, were all in motion towards the same place, or hurrying back to convey more spectators to the destined scene of entertainment.

"Those who were not rich enough to obtain admittance into the building, or who had not sufficient interest to pass the barrier by other means, crowded in multitudes round the doors, and covered all the space between the theatre and the Puerta d'Alcala, to join in the tumultuous cries of the spectators within, and to gain the earliest intelligence of the event of the combats.

"At length, not only every seat was occupied, but the space of floor between them filled with men, women, and children, crouching into all the grotesque attitudes which the convenience and view of the more fortunate spectator required; while anxious listeners crowded the avenues almost to suffocation, where the roar of the bull might delight their ears, but where there was not the slightest hope or possibility of ocular gratification.

"The circular of the Plaza de los Toros is somewhat more than three hundred feet in diameter, five times as large as that of Drury-lane theatre, and surrounded by a strong barrier-paling about six feet in height, in which, at equal distances, are four pair of double gates, used for the first

admission of the bulls, and afterward thrown open to tempt their re-entrance into the circus, when their impetuous fury prompts them to leap into the passage beyond them in pursuit of their tormentors. This passage is about eight feet in width, and surrounds the whole of the arena; affording at once a defence to the spectators in the lower seats, a retreat for the bull-fighters, and an additional space to contain those whose avidity for the amusement induces them to hazard its enjoyment in so dangerous a station. Beyond this passage, at a sufficient height for the lowest seat to command a perfect view of the barrier, the lower benches rise one above the other to the outer wall of the building, with avenues of ingress and egress resembling the vomitories of the ancient amphitheatres. Above this species of pit are two galleries surrounding the whole edifice; the first seated with rising benches like those below, and the second divided by partitions into boxes, decorated with silk hangings, and furnished after the taste of their proprietors; for most of the families of fashion have their private boxes in this national theatre. In this upper tier are the royal boxes and those appropriated to the court and foreign ambassadors, all of which are likewise adorned with festoons and draperies of silk; those of the royal family being the only ones which exhibited the colour of crimson in the decorations. These boxes are roofed in, with an awning projecting over the passage round the barrier; but the circus is open to the sky, admitting the beams of a powerful sun upon the spectators; and the seats varied in price accordingly as they were more or less exposed to this inconvenience.

"These ample dimensions, calculated to accommodate more than fifteen thousand people, are alone sufficient to attract and rivet admiration; but when every part of the building is filled with eager spectators, attired in all the varied costumes of the different provinces of Spain, the ladies in their mantillas, the soldiers in their motley uniforms, the monks in their sacerdotal habits, the citizens in their large capotes, and the courtiers in their embroidery, it is impossible to imagine a more imposing spectacle, or to describe the effect of the *coup d'œil* presented by such a regularly-arranged multitude, and such a variety of colours, upon an unaccustomed spectator.

"It was at this moment, when such crowds of human beings were seen waiting with anxious countenance for the scene of blood,—when every eye beamed with the same expression of impatience, and every lip opened but to speak upon the subject of the anticipated combat,—that it was impossible for classic recollection not to trace the striking resemblance between the descriptions of the ancient gladiatorial exercises of the Romans, and the paraphernalia of the modern bull-fight of the Spaniards.

"At a theatre of dramatic entertainment, neither the vilest acting, multiplied mistakes of machinery, nor the unnecessary delays of the performers, can induce the national gravity of the Spaniard to betray the slightest expression of impatience. But here every dormant passion of his nature seemed roused into action; his established solemnity appeared to be forgotten, and anxiety and impatience dwelt in the eager glance which every one directed towards the gate at which the animals were expected to enter.

"As the entrance of the bulls was protracted until the boxes of the grandees above were occupied, murmurs of impatience began to be heard from the lower seats, which gradually rose into clamour, and joined with the bellowing of the animals issuing from the adjoining receptacle in which they were secured.

"At length the sound of trumpets announced that this impatience was about to be gratified. The folding gates were thrown open, and a procession of the picadors, stacadors, banderillas, and matadors, bearing the various arms with which they were respectively to fight or to annoy the bulls, passed round the arena, headed by two men mounted on mules, and habited in the costume of heralds. The proclamation of the combat by the heralds was announced by a flourish of trumpets; and the torreadors made their obeisance to the spectators and retired, leaving one of the heralds mounted on a stage, as the arbiter and director of the tournament.

"There are four kinds of fighters or tormentors generally employed in the bull-fight; viz. the stacadors and banderillas, who fight on foot, the first waving their handkerchief or mantle in the face of the animal, and the others planting arrows in his neck, to increase his ferocity to its

utmost pitch against the entrance of the picadors, so denominated from their fighting on horseback, and the matador, whose business it is to complete the work by destroying the bull.

"From the departure of the procession to the entrance of the animal, a silence so profound reigned throughout this immense assembly, that it was the eye only which ascertained the occupation of the building; this silence was interrupted first by the blast of the signal trumpet, and then by the tremendous shout with which the bull was greeted by the spectators as he rushed into the arena. Appalled by the uproar, the animal generally stops his furious course in the centre and gazes with astonishment at the scene which surrounds him. His surprise, however, soon yields to his fury, and perceiving no object on which he can immediately vent his rage, he spurns the ground with his feet, throws the dust into the air with his horns, and gallops furiously round the theatre; soon becoming accustomed to the noise and appearance of the spectators, terror seems banished from his fury. His glaring eye, shooting its fiery glances from beneath the tufts of curling hair which shade his forehead, might prove an apology for fear in the breast of the boldest. His rage becomes increased, at the sound of the trumpet, by the entrance of the stacadors. These men, fancifully dressed and decorated, ran round him waving their handkerchiefs and mantles of different and gaudy colours in his face, attracting his indiscriminate rage, until one bolder than the rest concentrated his fury upon himself alone, and towards him the bull directed the whole energy of his impetuous pursuit. The stacador flew for a moment before him; then turning suddenly round, waited the attack with intrepidity; but at the instant when the inexperienced spectator supposed the next moment must be his last, he attracted the eye of the bull by his bright-coloured mantle, held on one side of his body, and against which the attack is directed. The stacador left it on his horns, and flew himself to the barrier. Tearing the mantle in a thousand pieces, the fury of the animal became tenfold at the escape of his tormentor, and he turned and pursued his companions, who one by one placed their handkerchiefs or mantles on his horns and escaped over the barrier. Sometimes the animal appeared to feel the futility of directing

his rage against the gaudy colour which attracted his attention, and directed his attack against the stacador himself, who in such cases was fain to owe his security to the swiftness of his feet, which scarcely enabled him to pass the barrier ere the horns of the bull resounded against it with a noise that increased both his own and the spectators' delight at his escape. This species of fighting is intended only to excite the bull to a greater degree of fury against the entrance of the picadors or horsemen, and lasts but a short time; while the shouts and exclamations of the spectators vary according to the rage of the bull and the boldness with which he is attacked, or the degree of danger to which the assailant is exposed.

"The trumpet sounded for the third time, and the picadors galloped into the circus, mounted on short strong horses, and curiously caparisoned with a flat broad-brimmed hat and feathers, a laced short and loose jacket, lying open to discover an embroidered vest, and leathern pantaloons and stockings in one, so stuffed as to give a gigantic and clumsy appearance to their limbs, but which defended their legs and thighs from the horns of the bull. These marched round the enraged animal, and approaching him in front with their lances, by turns invited and provoked him to the combat. For a moment he receded, seemingly appalled by the sight of his new enemies; but this was only to give additional force to his meditated plunge, which he made with one spring upon the horse and his rider.

"His attack this time was met by no futile enemy; his ferocity was no longer expended on a resistless or flying foe. The picador, fixing himself firmly in his stirrup and couching his lance, waited his arrival with intrepidity; and at the very instant when it seemed impossible but that the horse at all events must fall the victim of his rage, the lance was thrust into his back just above the neck, and the pain inflicted by the wound occasioned him to turn his head in another direction, at the moment that he expected to have accomplished the vengeance which flashed from his eye. In this attack every thing depends upon the firmness and steadiness with which the lance is aimed, for should it miss, it is generally fatal to the horse and highly dangerous to the rider. This occurred frequently from the receding motion of the horses, or by the bull changing his attack the

moment he felt the point of the lance; and several times, in spite of the pain, he pushed on and accomplished a portion of that vengeance, the whole of which would have annihilated its victims for ever. At these times his horns were plunged into the breast or bowels of the horse, and it became a personal contest between the two animals; for after contact it was impossible for the man to shorten his lance sufficiently to give any force to his blow, while the vigorous thrust of the bull in one minute overturned both horse and rider, and would have pursued his revenge to its utmost accomplishment, had not his rage been diverted by the other horsemen and by the stacador, who still hovered round for that purpose. The picador, if his horse was rendered unable to renew the combat, mounted another, and made a second attack on the bull to regain his character for dexterity. The valour of the horses now formed a second object of admiration. The courage with which they generally met the advancing bull, the struggle against his horns and head when contact was inevitable, the increased ardour with which, covered with blood and wounds, they still continued the fight, until, utterly exhausted, they fell expiring upon the spot, drew forth the plaudit shouts of the spectators, while they ought rather to extract groans of commiseration from every breast possessing a particle of humanity. On this day one horse particularly attracted the attention of the spectators by an exhibition of strength, constancy, and valour, which continued to the last. After one or two successful attacks on the part of his rider, the bull succeeded in reaching his flank, and, by one vigorous thrust, lifted up his hind quarters and threw him absolutely upon his head. The picador was with difficulty extricated from under him, and the bull had time to make repeated thrusts before he suffered his attention to be attracted by the stacadors. This same white horse I observed in the attack of three successive bulls, till the colour of his coat could scarcely be distinguished for the blood with which it was covered. During the last half-hour his bowels hung through his wounds and trailed upon the ground, which creating some marks of disgust in a part of the spectators, the inhuman rider merely pierced it with his lance to relieve it from the weight with which it was loaded, and continued the fight still mounted upon the unfortunate but noble animal,

till sinking from absolute exhaustion, and not being lifeless enough to be drawn in triumph by mules, amid the sound of trumpets, he was admitted into the passage behind the barrier; where, falling on his knees, he lay panting, faint, and exhausted, among the feet of the spectators, till death or insensibility relieved him from his pain, and he was dragged behind the scenes of this inhuman slaughter-house. The trumpet sounded a fourth time, and the picadors, retiring, were immediately succeeded by the banderillas, so called from a species of arrow with which they are armed. They carried one of these darts, pointed at the end, and ornamented with fireworks, in each hand, and tempted the bull to the attack by flourishing them in his face.

"The animal, a little exhausted by his encounter with the horsemen, now contented himself with keeping his assailants at bay, and eyed them silently and sullenly, until, roused by the boldness of their approach, he singled out the nearest, and erecting his tail rushed onward to the fight. The banderilla remained steady until the horns of the bull were within a few inches of his breast, when, inclining his body a little to the right, he suddenly and dexterously placed a dart on each side of the upper part of his neck, which inducing a sudden and momentary contraction of the bull, he made his own escape, and either procured a new supply of darts, or, having thus performed his duty as banderilla, retreated until the next combat. In a few moments the combustible material contained in the fulminated ornament of the arrow ignited, and by its explosion added terror and agony to the fury of the animal; who, as he attacked each of the banderillas in turn, received in his neck the darts with which they were armed.

"This species of attack, next to the final one of the matador, is the most dangerous; for, as the greatest dexterity and vigour are required in placing, so the slightest failure on the part of the banderilla must be fatal, the points of the horns always passing close to his side. The bull, thus provoked to madness by the anguish occasioned by the dart, rendered still more poignant by the gunpowder, now rushed indiscriminately on all, flew at the spectators, and frequently in the energy of the pain leaped the barrier, to the great terror of those who filled the space beyond it, and who with incredible alacrity jumped into the arena, while the bull

rushed round the space they had just occupied, by turns roaring at the spectators on the one side, and attempting to attack those on the other; till he again entered the arena through the folding gates, which were successively thrown open at his approach. On one of these occasions, the tumult was so great to get over the barrier, that the impetuosity of the bull enabled him to overtake a young man before he could accomplish his escape. He threw him some distance from the ground, and violently gored him afterward with his horns. He was borne senseless and dying from that assembly which he had joined to witness and exult in the destruction of the very animal from whom he was destined to receive his own death-blow. The herald now sounded his trumpet for the fifth time. The banderillas retired, and the arena was left to the bull, who rushed round it foaming with rage and pain; tossing up the dust, lashing his tail, and directing his fury indiscriminately against the barrier and the spectators.

"While the bull thus exhausted his impetuous rage, and bellowed with agony, the matador entered calmly into the circus; his head uncovered, his right hand bearing a naked small sword, and a green mantle hanging loosely on his left arm.

"The clamours of the multitude were now succeeded by the silence of listening and intense observation and curiosity. The eye, before distracted and divided among the variety of assailants, who were occupied merely in tormenting and exciting the animal to the utmost fury of his nature, now dwells on two objects alone,—the bull still wildly foaming, but suddenly become stationary, and eying his antagonist with the dark glance of madness; and the matador, who met the fiery look of the animal with the steady and determined gaze of undaunted intrepidity.

"The spectator, with breathless anxiety, seemed to prepare for the contemplation of the mortal contest. The glances of every eye were centred in the same focus, and rested on the same objects. Every movement of the combatants became painfully interesting, as the fate of one or both of them hung upon its influence.

"Several minutes were now spent by the combatants in the contemplation of each other. The matador first approached and waved his mantle in the eyes of the bull,

whose immediate attack was suspended by the point of the sword which he beheld opposed to his advance. At length, forgetting his danger in his fury, he sprang forward, and was dexterously avoided by the matador, who, leaping on one side, had resumed his defensive position before the attack could be renewed in another direction. The combat continued thus silently for a short period, with no roar on the part of the bull, nor one exclamation from the matador or the spectators. The silence was at length broken by the sound of the trumpet, which knelled the fate of the unfortunate bull by giving the signal to his antagonist for the completion of his work, and for the catastrophe of the combat. He accordingly collected himself for the decisive blow, tempted the bull to make another spring, and plunged his sword into the place where the junction is formed between the head and the neck at the root of the horns. The bull staggered with the thrust, and for a moment receded, but seeing the matador still standing in his front, his bloodshot eye beamed with the last ray of fire, and collecting all his remaining strength he made one more attempt at vengeance. His antagonist this time generally contents himself with avoiding the attack, without repeating his blow. The legs of the animal begin to totter, his head falls on his breast, he reels with the faintness of approaching death; he utters no sound, but reserves his last struggle for another fruitless attempt at revenge.

"At length, unable to move from the spot where he stood, his glazed eyeballs rolled insensibly over the spectators who were gazing at his misery. Life's last struggles became fainter and fainter; his knees alone supported his body, till, unable longer to contend with his fate, he sank in the dust already moistened with his blood, and expired without a groan.

"The instant that the motionless limbs of the unfortunate animal proclaimed that life had departed, the ear was suddenly assailed by the sound of trumpets, the shouts of the multitude, and cries of bravo! bravo! which issued from all sides; while handkerchiefs and mantles waved in the air spoke to the eye the triumph and pleasure of the spectators. In the midst of this tumult, the folding doors were thrown open, and three mules abreast, richly caparisoned and ornamented with flags, were conducted in full gallop. The horns of the deceased bull were attached to

the harness of the mules, and the body was borne round the arena, and from the sight, amid the tumultuous plaudits of the spectators.

"It is at this moment, when the scapulary of the priest is seen flourishing in the air by the side of the soldier's helmet; the white handkerchief of the lady waving close to the black mantilla of her own criada; and the huge cocked-hat of the citizen uplifted with the little montero of the peasant, that the *coup d'œil* of this national spectacle becomes strikingly curious to the stranger.

"In this manner eight bulls were successively sacrificed in the morning, and six in the evening of this day; seven or eight horses fell the victims of this national propensity; and it is impossible to say which excited the greatest degree of astonishment—the dexterity of the men, the intrepidity and vigour of the animals, or the inhuman delight of the spectators.

"To see men crowd together and interest themselves in a scene of human danger and brutal slaughter is sufficiently shocking to the general principles of humanity; but to behold the sex formed by nature to gratify the softest of our feelings, and to become the subjects of our more tender sentiments,—to see young and beautiful girls eagerly gazing on a scene where the destruction of life is the object,—to mark the eye whose beams were intended for expressions of delight and love glut itself on blood, and eagerly watch without disgust and horror, the different movements of a mortal strife,—to hear a female voice mix in the tumultuous shouts of extravagant pleasure, excited by the struggling agonies of a generous and noble animal, is so contrary to all received and imagined notions of female character and delicacy, that the soul shrinks from them as women; and it is difficult to think of them as the same beings who are calculated by nature for the gratification of our softer passions, and designed as the chief sources of our domestic felicity.

"The bulls used, or rather abused, upon these occasions are bred on the estates of different noblemen, amateurs in the art, or, as they would be called in England, '*of the fancy.*' The owners are generally distinguished by the colour of the riband on their horns. The names of these noblemen resound through the theatre at the entrance of a bull; and shouts of applause, superior to those which in England

greet the appearance of any favourite performer, always attend the entrance of an arrival of any favourite breed, or of a *torero* rendered famous by his courage or dexterity.

"Perhaps the battle of Salamanca itself did not create more admiration of English valour than was excited by a Scotch soldier at a bull-fight in the great square of that city. Impelled, it is supposed, by intoxication, this man suddenly leaped into the area of the square, and, attacking the bull with his bayonet, was in a moment precipitated into the air by his horns. Rendered unable from the violence of the concussion to resume his feet, he yet retained his weapon, and met the second attack upon his knees; but, before he could be rescued, became the victim of his own rashness and the fury of the bull, as well as an example that it is dexterity, and not courage, which renders the strength and rage of the animal so impotent against the toreros in these exhibitions. The unfortunate man was borne from the assembly amid the shouts of 'Vivan los Inglezes! bravo los Inglezes! O valorosos Escosezes!'

"Among other instances of the eagerness which was displayed on the occasion at which I was present, the peasants, who filled the passage round the barrier, frequently got into the arena, and tempted the bull to attack them by every means in their power; waving their pocket handkerchiefs, jackets, and caps in his eyes, at the hazard of their lives, and suffering the blows, which the legitimate bull-fighters dealt with no small degree of liberality, without exhibiting any signs of indignation.

"The following expression of an old lady of high rank, who occupied a seat near me, will prove that neither age nor sex is free from the influence of this national mania; and that it pervades the upper as well as the lower classes of society. The matador once performed his work so dexterously that the sword completely penetrated the head, and became perceptible under the throat. The consequence was the almost immediate death of the animal, with the loss of only a few drops of blood from his mouth. 'Oh, the dear creature, I could kiss him for it!' was the exclamation uttered by the old lady, with all the delight of a gratified amateur; but whether the imagined salute was intended for the dying bull or the victorious matador I was at a loss to determine.

"I was present at several bull-fights in the lesser towns in Spain, where the *plazas grandes*, or great squares, supply the place of a theatre; and the balconies and windows of the surrounding houses, together with temporary scaffoldings, form the spectatorial. As the ballets, however, of our Italian opera become nauseous and ridiculous when performed by the tatterdemalions of an itinerant company, so does this national exhibition, when divested of the paraphernalia which give it some degree of interest in Madrid, degenerate into the disgusting scene of a common bull-bait.

"There is another species of this entertainment, called the fight of the *novillas*, or young bulls, in which the animals are not destroyed, but only trained by their tormentors, and remanded from the tribunal till they become sufficiently ferocious to grace the exhibitions of the capital. Upon these occasions a figure resembling the English scarecrow is fixed in the centre of the arena to attract the bull; and dogs are frequently used to add to his irritation. It frequently, however, happens, that he becomes too exasperated to quit the scene of combat at the pleasure of his tormentors; and in such cases a cow is driven into the circle. The bull invariably becomes tranquillized the moment he beholds her; his roar of fury subsides into a gentle moan, and he follows her quietly from the presence of the spectators; a tacit, though forcible reproof to the surrounding females, who, calculated as they are by their ascendency over our sex to ameliorate the roughness of its nature, are, on the contrary, patronising by their presence and applause such scenes of blood as these exhibitions.

"From the earliest period of their existence, the Spaniards are taught to consider the bull-fight as the highest species of entertainment. In many towns bulls are lent to form the Sunday-evening amusement of the children of the place, who, while their sisters are dancing the bolero at the doors of their respective houses, tie the unfortunate animal to a stake in the *plaza mayor*, where he is subjected for some hours to all the ingenuity of his young tormentors.

"In olden times, national entertainments generally celebrated some circumstance worthy of recollection, or increased by their tendency some national characteristic worthy of preservation. It was thus that the Olympic games of the

Greeks tended both to excite that literary emulation which enrolled their nations in the annals of learned fame, and to improve them in those exercises which were useful in the warfare of the times. The gladiatorial exhibitions of the Romans kept up that apathy to scenes of blood without which an empire rising upon the spoils of slaughter and conquest could never have been extended and preserved. The tournaments of the days of Charlemagne continued the gallant knights in the practice of those warlike feats which rendered them so famous to posterity and so useful to their country in the hour of battle. But neither the bull-fights of Spain, nor the boxing-matches of England, can seek for any apology excepting in the brutality which patronises them. The former has the advantage over the latter, as it certainly tends to display the superiority of human reason over brutal force; for the exhibition of a bull-fight may teach us that presence of mind can extricate us from a danger where all our personal strength would be of little or no avail.

"The prevalence of this delight in Spain is too powerful for any description to convey an adequate idea. It must be witnessed to be believed; for a Kemble, a Kean, a Siddons, an O'Neil, or a Kelly, never drew down more vociferous plaudits than the dexterous plunge of a banderilla, the rash attack of a torero, or the sudden and mortal wound of a matador."

Painful as it is, the task we have undertaken compels us to notice the baiting of bulls and other animals, which has in all times been a disgrace to our own country, and the practice of which, though it is fortunately declining in accordance with the more humane spirit of the age, is not likely to be finally extirpated so long as the lower orders may plead in excuse for their continuance the cruelties of the field sports reserved for the amusement of the upper classes. Keen must be that casuist who can discover any essential difference between the hunting of a hare or fox and the baiting of a bull or badger, except that the former cruelty is practised by those whose rank and education ought to have qualified them for a nobler pleasure than that of tormenting inoffensive animals; while the latter is the sport of those who cannot be expected to have much taste for more refined amusements, and who may plead in its extenua

tion the examples daily exhibited by those who have converted cruelty into a privilege. The training of bulls, bears, horses, and other animals, for the purpose of baiting them with dogs, was certainly practised by the jugglers; and we have elsewhere shown that royal personages, and even queens and ladies of the court, did not scruple to countenance by their presence these barbarous pastimes. Fitz Stephen, who lived in the reign of Henry II., tells us that in the forenoon of every holyday during the winter season, the young Londoners were amused with boars opposed to each other in battle, or with bulls and full grown bears baited by dogs. Stow, who records this fact, makes no mention of horses; and it is believed that the baiting of this noble animal, though known to have been occasionally performed, was never a general practice. Asses, also, were treated with the same inhumanity, but probably the poor beasts did not afford sufficient sport in the tormenting, and therefore were seldom brought forward as the objects of this ruthless diversion.

There were several places in the vicinity of the metropolis set apart for the baiting of beasts, and especially the district of St. Saviour's parish in Southwark, called Paris Garden, which contained two bear-gardens, said to have been the first that were made near London. In these, according to Stow, were scaffolds for the spectators to stand upon, an indulgence for which they paid in the following manner: "Those who go to Paris Garden, the Bell Savage, or Theatre, to behold bear-baiting, enterludes, or fence-play, must not account of any pleasant spectacle, unless they first pay one penny at the gate, another at the entrie of the scaffold, and a third for quiet standing." One Sunday afternoon, in the year 1582, the scaffold, being overcharged with spectators, fell down during the performance, and a great number of persons were killed or maimed by the accident, which the puritans of the time failed not to attribute to a Divine judgment.

Erasmus, who visited England in the time of Henry VIII., says, there were many herds of bears maintained in the court for the purpose of baiting. When Queen Mary visited her sister the Princess Elizabeth, during her confinement at Hatfield House, the next morning, after mass, a grand exhibition of bear-baiting was made for their amusement,

with which, it is said, "their highnesses were right well content." Queen Elizabeth, on the 25th of May, 1559, soon after her accession to the throne, gave a splendid dinner to the French ambassadors, who afterward were entertained with the baiting of bulls and bears, the queen herself standing with the ambassadors to look at the pastime till six at night. The day following, the same ambassadors went by water to Paris Garden, where they saw another baiting of bulls and bears; and again, twenty-seven years afterward, Queen Elizabeth received the Danish ambassador at Greenwich, who was treated with the sight of a bear and bull-baiting, tempered, says Hollinshead, with other merry disports; and for the diversion of the populace there was a horse with an ape upon his back, which highly pleased them, so that they expressed "their inward conceived joy and delight with shrill shouts and variety of gestures."

Laneham, speaking of a bear-baiting exhibited before Queen Elizabeth in 1575, says that thirteen bears were provided for the occasion, and that they were baited with a great sort of bandogs. In the foregoing relations we find no mention made of a ring put into the nose of the bear when he was baited, which certainly was the more modern practice; hence the expression by the Duke of Newcastle in the Humorous Lovers, printed in 1617, "I fear the wedlock ring more than the bear does the ring in his nose."

When a bear-baiting was about to take place, it was publicly made known, and the bearward previously paraded the streets with his animal, to excite the curiosity of the populace, and induce them to become spectators of the sport. On these occasions the bear, who was usually preceded by a minstrel or two, carried a monkey or baboon upon his back. In the Humorous Lovers, the play just now quoted, "Tom of Lincoln" is mentioned as the name of a famous bear; and one of the characters, pretending to personate a bearward, says, "I'll set up my bills, that the gamesters of London, Horsly-down, Southwark, and Newmarket may come in and bait him here before the ladies; but first, boy, go fetch me a bagpipe; we will walk the streets in triumph, and give the people notice of our sport."

The two following advertisements, which were published in the reign of Queen Anne, may serve as a specimen of the elegant manner in which these pastimes were announced

to the public. "At the bear-garden in Hockley-in-the-hole, near Clerkenwell Green, this present Monday, there is a great match to be fought, by two dogs of Smithfield Bars against two dogs of Hampstead, at the Reading Bull, for one guinea to be spent: five let-goes out of hand; which goes fairest and furthest in wins all. The famous bull of fireworks, which pleased the gentry to admiration. Likewise there are two bear-dogs to jump three jumps apiece at the bear, which jumps highest, for ten shillings to be spent. Also variety of bull-baiting and bear-baiting; it being a day of general sport by all the old gamesters; and a bulldog to be drawn up with fireworks. Beginning at three o'clock."

"At William Well's bear-garden, in Tuttle Fields, Westminster, this present Monday, there will be a green bull baited, and twenty dogs to fight for a collar; and the dog that runs furthest and fairest wins the collar: with other diversions of bull and bear-baiting. Beginning at two of the clock."

The time usually chosen for the exhibition of those national babarisms, which were sufficiently disgraceful without this additional reproach, was the afterpart of the Sabbath-day. "It were well," says Strutt, "if these were the only vulnerable parts of the character of our ancestors; but it must be confessed that there are other pastimes which equally attracted their attention, and manifested a degree of barbarism which will admit of no just defence." Sir Richard Steele, reprobating the inhumanity of throwing at cocks, makes these pertinent observations; "Some French writers have represented this diversion of the common people much to our disadvantage, and imputed it to a natural fierceness and cruelty of temper, as they do some other entertainments peculiar to our nation: I mean those elegant diversions of bull-baiting and prize-fighting, with the like ingenious recreations of the bear-garden. I wish I knew how to answer this reproach which is cast upon us, and excuse the death of so many innocent cocks, bulls, dogs, and bears, as have been set together by the ears, or died an untimely death only to make us sport."

There is another barbarous diversion, somewhat different from bull-baiting, and much less humane, which seems to have been only practised at Stamford, in Lincolnshire, and

at Tutbury, in Staffordshire. The traditionary origin of the bull-running at Stamford, and the manner in which it was performed in the seventeenth century, are given by Butcher, in his survey of that town; and this account I shall lay before my readers in the author's own words. "The bull-running is a sport of no pleasure, except to such as take a pleasure in beastliness and mischief: it is performed just the day six weeks before Christmas. The butchers of the town, at their own charge, against the time provide the wildest bull they can get. This bull over night is had into some stable or barn belonging to the alderman. The next morning, proclamation is made by the common bellman of the town, round about the same, that each one shut up their shop-doors and gates, and that none, upon pain of imprisonment, offer to do any violence to strangers; for the preventing whereof, the town being a great thoroughfare, and then being term-time, a guard is appointed for the passing of travellers through the same, without hurt; that none have any iron upon their bull-clubs, or other staff which they pursue the bull with. Which proclamation made, and the gates all shut up, the bull is turned out of the alderman's house; and then hivie-skivy, tag and rag, men, women, and children, of all sorts and sizes, with all the dogs in the town promiscuously running after him with their bull-clubs, spattering dirt in each other's faces, that one would think them to be so many furies started out of hell for the punishment of Cerberus, &c. And, which is the greater shame, I have seen persons of rank and family, of both sexes,* following this bulling business. I can say no more of it, but only to set forth the antiquity thereof as tradition goes. William, Earl of Warren, the first lord of this town, in the time of King John, standing upon his castle-walls in Stamford, saw two bulls fighting for a cow in a meadow under the same. A butcher of the town, owner of one of the bulls, set a great mastiff dog upon his own bull, who forced him up into the town; when all the butchers' dogs, great and small, followed in pursuit of the bull, which, by this time made stark mad with the noise of the people and the fierceness of the dogs, ran over man, woman, and child that stood in his way. This caused all the butchers and others in the

* This passage he has Latinized in these words: "Senatores majorum gentium et matronæ de eodem gradu."

town to rise up, as it were, in a kind of tumult." The sport so highly diverted the earl, who it seems was a spectator, that "he gave all those meadows in which the two bulls had been fighting perpetually as a common to the butchers of the town, after the first grass is eaten, to keep their cattle in till the time of slaughter, upon the condition, that on the anniversary of that day they should yearly find, at their own expense, a mad bull for the continuance of the sport."

The company of minstrels belonging to the manor of Tutbury had several peculiar privileges granted to them by a charter from John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster. In this charter it is required of the minstrels to perform their respective services, upon the day of the assumption of our Lady (the 15th of August), at the steward's court, held for the honour of Tutbury, according to ancient custom. They had also, it seems, a privilege, exclusive of the charter, to claim upon that day a bull from the prior of Tutbury. In the seventeenth century these services were performed the day after the assumption; and the bull was given by the Duke of Devonshire, as the prior's representative.

The historian of Staffordshire informs us, that a dinner was provided for the minstrels upon this occasion, which being finished, they went anciently to the abbey-gate, but of late years to "a little barn by the town side, in expectance of the bull to be turned forth to them." The animal provided forth is purpose had his horns sawed off, his ears cropped, his tail cut short, his body smeared over with soap, and his nose blown full of beaten pepper, in order to make him as mad as it was possible for him to be. Whence, "after solemn proclamation first being made by the steward, that all manner of persons should give way to the bull, and not come near him by forty feet, nor by any means to hinder the minstrels, but to attend to his or their own safeties, every one at his peril; he was then put forth, to be caught by the minstrels, and none other, within the county of Stafford, between the time of his being turned out to them and the setting of the sun, on the same day; which if they cannot doe, but the bull escapes from them untaken, and gets over the river into Derbyshire, he continues to be Lord Devonshire's property; on the other hand, if the minstrels can take him, and hold him so long as to cut off some small matter of his hair, and bring the same to the market-cross, in token that

they have taken him, the bull is brought to the bailiff's house in Tutbury, and there collared and roped, and so conveyed to the bull-ring in High-street, where he is baited with dogs; the first course allotted for the king, the second for the honour of the town, and the third for the king of the minstrels; this done, the minstrels claim the beast, and may sell, or kill and divide him among them, according to their pleasure." The author then adds, "this rustic sport, which they call bull-running, should be annually performed by the minstrels only; but now-a-days they are assisted by the promiscuous multitude, that flock thither in great numbers, and are much pleased with it; though sometimes through the emulation in point of manhood that has been long cherished between the Staffordshire and the Derbyshire men, perhaps as much mischief may have been done as in the bull-fighting practised at Valencia, Madrid, and other places in Spain." The noise and confusion occasioned by this exhibition are aptly described in the marriage of Robin Hood and Chlorinda, Queen of Titbury Feast, a popular ballad published early in the last century:

> Before we came to it, we heard a strange shouting,
> And all that were in it look'd madly,
> For some were a bull-back, some dancing a morris,
> And some singing Arthur O'Bradley.*

CHAPTER XVI.

Dancing.

"Dancing, being that which gives graceful motions to all our limbs, and, above all things, manliness and a becoming confidence to young children, I think, cannot be learned too early. Nothing appears to me to give children so much confidence and behaviour, and so to raise them to the conversation of those above their years, as dancing."—*Locke's Treatise on Education.*

"Multarum deliciarum comes saltatio."—*Cicero.*

UNDER certain vehement emotions, more especially those of a pleasant description, all men are, and ever have been, natural, spontaneous, involuntary dancers. The child is

* Extracted from Strutt's Sports and Pastimes.

but "the father of the man," when in his first leap for joy he executes *le premier pas de la danse*, yielding to the impulses of our common nature without dreaming that the saltatory merriment in which he indulges, and which might not improperly be termed the laughter of the legs, has been solemnly termed "the art of expressing the sentiments of the mind or the passions by measures, steps, or bounds, that are made in cadence; by regulated motions of the body, and by graceful gestures; all performed to the sound of musical instruments, or of the voice."

The connexion that exists between certain sounds and those motions of the human body called dancing, is assuredly a curious speculation that deserves more inquiry than has hitherto been bestowed upon it. Even between inanimate objects and certain notes, there is a sympathy, if that term may be allowed, which is equally surprising and inexplicable. It is well known that the most massive walls, nay, the solid ground itself, will responsively shake and tremble at particular notes in music. This strongly indicates the presence of some universally-diffused and exceedingly elastic fluid, which is thrown into vibrations by the concussions of the atmosphere upon it, produced by the motions of the sounding body. If these concussions are so strong as to make the large quantity of elastic fluid vibrate that is dispersed through a stone wall, or a considerable portion of earth, it is no wonder they should have the same effect upon that invisible and exceedingly subtile matter which pervades and seems to reside in our nerves.

"Some there are whose nerves are so constructed that they cannot be affected by the sounds which affect others; while there are individuals whose nerves are so irritable that they cannot, without the greatest difficulty, sit or stand still when they hear a favourite piece of music played. It has been conjectured by profound inquirers into such subjects, that all the sensations and passions to which we are subject depend immediately upon the vibrations excited in the nervour fluid above mentioned. If this be true, we shall immediately understand the origin of the various dances among different nations. One kind of vibration, for instance, excites the passions of anger, pride, &c., which are paramount among warlike nations. The sounds capable of such effects would naturally constitute their martial

music, and dances conformable to it would be simultaneously instituted. Among barbarous people, in particular, this appears to have been an invariable occurrence. Other vibrations of the nervous fluid produce the passions of love, joy, &c.; and sounds capable of exciting these particular vibrations will immediately be formed into music for dances of another kind."*

As barbarous people have the strongest passions, so they are the most easily affected by sounds, and the most addicted to dancing, whatever be the nature of the music by which it is accompanied. Mr. Gallini informs us, that the spirit of dancing prevails almost beyond imagination, among both men and women, in the greater part of Africa, in some districts of which it arises beyond a mere instinct, and may almost be termed a rage. Upon the Gold Coast, especially, the inhabitants are so passionately fond of it, that in the midst of their hardest labour, if they hear a person sing or any musical instrument played, they cannot refrain from dancing. There are even well-attested stories of some negroes flinging themselves at the feet of a European playing on the fiddle, entreating him to desist, unless he had a mind to tire them to death, as they could not cease dancing so long as he continued playing.

The same involuntary, we had almost said spasmodic, obedience of the limbs to certain sounds, is found to prevail among the American Indians, whose saltatory orgasms are even more uncouth and irrepressible than those of the Africans. They love every thing, says Gallini, that makes a noise, however harsh and dissonant. They will also hum over something like a rude tune, to which they dance thirty or forty in a circle, stretching out their hands and laying them on each other's shoulders, stamping and jumping, and using the most antic gestures for several hours, till they are heartily weary. But we need not refer to nations either barbarous or civilized to prove this instinctive connexion between certain vibrations and correspondent movements of the limbs, or to establish the pleasant intoxication of both the mind and body which dancing is calculated to produce. Singing and dancing have prevailed from the creation to the present time, says a very grave inquirer; and

* Encyclop. Britan. art. *Dancing*.

they will continue, according to all appearances, till the destruction of our species.

How profane soever some may affect to consider this amusement as at present conducted, it was at first, and indeed during some thousand years, a religious ceremony, as we have already intimated in noticing the festivals of the Jews. Some commentators are of opinion, that every psalm had a distinct dance appropriated to it. "In utroque Psalmo, nomine chori, intelligi posse cum certo instrumento homines ad sonum ipsius tripudiantes." In the temples of Jerusalem, Samaria, and Alexandria a stage for these exercises was erected in one part, thence called the choir, the name of which has been preserved in our churches, and the custom too till within a few centuries. The Cardinal Ximenes revived in his time the practice of Mosarabic masses in the cathedral at Toledo, when the people danced both in the choir and in the nave with great decorum and devotion. Le Père Menestrier, jesuit, relates the same thing of some churches in France, in 1682; and Mr. Gallini tells us, that at Limoges, not long ago, the people used to dance the round in the choir of the church, which is under the invocation of their patron saint; and at the end of each psalm, instead of the *Gloria Patri*, they sang as follows: "*St. Marcel! pray for us, and we will dance in honour of you.*" From these instances we may see, that the modern sect of fanatics called jumpers, who seem to entertain the strange notion that he who leaps the highest is the nearest to heaven, have abused rather than invented the custom of religious dancing. Nor do we see why any motion of the body should be deemed incompatible with the feelings and offices of devotion. Considered as a mere expression of joy, dancing is no more a profanation than singing, or than simple speaking; nor can it be thought in the least more absurd that a Christian should dance for joy that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead, than that David danced before the ark, when it was returned to him after a long absence. In these and similar cases the intention and the feeling, where they emanate from genuine piety, must be held to hallow the act.

The Egyptians had their solemn dances as well as the Jews; the principal was their astronomical dance; of which the sacrilegious dance round the golden calf was an

imitation. From the Jews and Egyptians the practice passed into Greece, where the astronomic dance was adapted to the theatre, with chorus, strophe, antistrophe, epode, &c., as we have already remarked in referring to the origin of their drama. In the hands, or, as we should rather say, in the feet of this ingenious and highly civilized people, dancing, which among the barbarians was a mere ungovernable transport, became a regular art, by means of which, through the secret sympathies that cement sound and motion with feeling, any passion whatever could be excited in the minds of the beholders. In this way effects were produced upon the sensitive Greeks that to our colder temperaments appear almost incredible. At Athens, it is said, that the dance of the Eumenides, or Furies, upon the theatre, had so expressive a character as to strike the spectators with irresistible terror; men grown old in the profession of arms trembled; the multitude rushed out; women were thrown into fits; and many imagined they saw in earnest those terrible deities commissioned with the vengeance of heaven, to pursue and punish crimes upon earth. Plato and Lucian both speak of dancing as a divine invention, although in the instance just recorded it seems to have been perverted to purposes of a rather demoniacal nature.

Of the importance attached to this subject by the ancients we may judge from the fact that it engaged the serious attention of Plato, who reduces the dances of the Greeks to three classes. 1. The military dances, which tended to make the body robust, active, and well disposed for all the exercises of war. 2. The domestic dances, which had for their object an agreeable and innocent recreation and amusement. 3. The mediatorial dances, which were in use in expiations and sacrifices. The Spartans had invented the first for an early excitation of the courage of their children; and to lead them on insensibly to the exercise of the armed dance. This children's dance, which used to be executed in the public place, was composed of two choirs, the one of grown men, the other of children; whence, being chiefly designed for the latter, it took its name. The choir of the children regulated their motions by those of the men, and all danced at the same time, singing the poems of Thales, Alcman, and Dionysadotus. The Pyrrhic dance was performed by young men, armed cap-à-pie, who exe-

cuted to the sound of the flute all the proper movements either for attack or defence. It was composed of four parts: the first, the *podism*, or footing, which consisted in a quick shifting motion of the feet, such as was necessary for overtaking a flying enemy, or for getting away from him when an overmatch. The second part was the *xiphism:* this was a kind of mock fight, in which the dancers imitated all the motions of combatants; aiming a stroke, darting a javelin, or dexterously dodging, parrying, or avoiding a blow or thrust. The third part, called the *homos*, consisted in very high leaps, or vaultings, which the dancers frequently repeated, for the better using themselves occasionally to leap a ditch, or spring over a wall. The *tetracomos*, the fourth and last part, was a square figure, executed by slow and majestic movements; but it is uncertain whether this was every where performed in the same manner.

Of all the Greeks the Spartans were those who most cultivated the Pyrrhic dance. This warlike people exercised their children, at it from the age of five years to the accompaniment of hymns and songs. The following was sung at the dance called Trichoria, from its being composed of three choirs—one of children, another of young men, and the third of old. The latter opened the dance, saying, "In time past we were valiant." The young men answered, "We are so at present." To which the chorus of children replied, "We shall be still more so when our time comes." The Spartans never danced but with real arms. In process of time, however, other nations came to use weapons of wood on such occasions. Nay, it was only so late as the time of Athenæus, who lived in the second century, that the dancers of the Pyrrhic, instead of arms, carried only flasks, ivy-bound wands, or reeds. But even in Aristotle's time they had begun to use thyrsuses instead of pikes, and lighted torches instead of javelins and swords, with which they executed a dance denominated the conflagration of the world. A remnant of this military exercise, called the sword-dance, was currently performed by some of the minstrel troops, and has been occasionally presented in England by vagrant morris-dancers to a still later period.

Tacitus thus describes a species of sword-dance among the ancient Germans: "One public diversion was constantly exhibited at all their meetings:—young men, who

by frequent exercise have attained to great perfection in that pastime, strip themselves, and dance among the points of swords and spears with most wonderful agility, and even with the most elegant and graceful motions. They do not perform this dance for hire, but for the entertainment of the spectators, esteeming their applause a sufficient reward." Mr. Brand tells us, that he has seen this dance frequently performed in the north of England, about Christmas time, with little or no variation from the ancient method.

Of the Grecian dances for amusement and recreation some were but simple gambols or sportive exercises, which had no character of imitation, and of which the greater part exist to this day. The others were more complex, more agreeable, figured, and were always accompanied with singing. Of this character was that called the wine-press, of which there is a description in Longinus, and the Ionian dances. These last in their original institution were decent and modest; but in time their movements came to be so depraved as to be employed in expressing nothing but the most indecorous voluptuousness.

Among the ancients there were no festivals nor religious ceremonies which were not accompanied with songs and dances. It was not held possible to celebrate any mystery, or to be initiated in any sacred institution, without the intervention of these two arts; which were considered so essential, that to express the crime of such as were guilty of revealing the mysteries they employed the word *kheistæ* —"to be out of the dance." The most ancient of these religious dances is the *Bacchic*, which was not only consecrated to Bacchus, but to all those deities whose festival was celebrated with any kind of enthusiasm. On his return from Crete, Theseus instituted a dance, at which he himself assisted at the head of a numerous and splendid band of youths, round the altar of Apollo. It was composed of three parts—the *strophe*, the *antistrophe*, and the *stationary*. In the strophe the movements were from right to left; in the antistrophe, from the left to the right; in the stationary, which did not mean an absolute pause or rest, but only a more grave and slow movement, they danced before the altar. Plutarch is persuaded that in this dance there is a profound mystery. Theseus gave it the name of *geranos*, or "the crane," because the figures which charac-

terized it bore a resemblance to those described by cranes in their flight.

In the elaborate eulogium which Lucian has left us, it appears that the pantomimic powers of the ancients were equal to the representation of any of their mythological fables; and that they succeeded in expressing by gesture alone all those inflections of the passions, of which we find the enunciation so difficult with the help of those organs that seem to have been expressly provided us for that purpose by nature. He gives a decided preference to this dumb show over both tragedy and comedy, with all their vocal powers; and even insists that the actors in the scenes he describes must have been endowed with every elegant accomplishment and amiable virtue.

From Greece these dances with different modifications found their way across the Adriatic. Rome adopted her manners, her arts, and her vices;—thence they were dispersed over the rest of Europe. In the reign of Augustus two very extraordinary men made their appearance, who invented a new species of entertainment, which they carried to an astonishing degree of perfection. Nothing was then talked of but the wonderful talents and amazing performances of Pylades and Bathyllus, who were the first to introduce what the French call the *ballet d'action*; wherein the performer is both actor and dancer.

Pylades undertook the hard task of representing, with the assistance of the dance alone, strong and pathetic situations, and may be called the father of that style of dancing which is known to us by the name of grave or serious pantomime. Bathyllus represented such subjects as required a certain liveliness and agility. Nature had been excessively partial to these two men, who were endowed with genius and all the exterior charms that could captivate the eye; and who by their study and application displayed to the greatest advantage all the resources that the art of dancing could supply. These, like two phenomena, disappeared, and never did the world see their like again. Government withdrew their protection, the art gradually sank into obscurity, and became even entirely forgotten on the accession of Trajan to the empire.

Thus, buried with the other arts in entire oblivion, dancing remained uncultivated till about the fifteenth century,

when ballets were revived in Italy at a magnificent entertainment given by a nobleman of Tortona, on account of the marriage between Galeas, Duke of Milan, and Isabella of Arragon. Every resource that poetry, dancing, music, and machinery could supply was exhausted on the occasion. The description given of so superb an entertainment excited the admiration of all Europe, and the emulation of several men of genius, who, improving upon the hint given them, introduced among their countrymen a kind of spectacle equally pleasing and novel.

It would seem, however, that at first the women had no share in the public or theatrical dance; at least we do not find them mentioned in the various entertainments given at the opera at Paris, till the 21st of January, 1681, when the then dauphiness, the Princess de Conti, and some other ladies of the first distinction in the court of Louis XIV., performed a ballet with the opera, called *Le Triomphe de l'Amour*. This union of the two sexes seemed to enliven and render the spectacle more pleasing and brilliant than it had ever been before. It was received with so much applause, that on the 16th of May following, when the same opera was acted in Paris, at the theatre of the Palais Royal, it was thought indispensable for the success of that kind of entertainment to introduce female dancers, who have ever since continued to be the principal support of the opera.

Dancing subsequently continued to encroach upon the sister arts of poetry and music, until it came to be considered by many, particularly at Paris, as the paramount attraction. To the monotony and tiresome length of the recitatives may be chiefly attributed the disfavour into which music had fallen. A wit, being one day asked what could be done to restore the waning taste for the opera, replied, that they should lengthen the dances and shorten the petticoats. In the first instance music supplanted poetry, and dancing now superseded both; usurping a pre-eminence which several distinguished ballet-masters contributed to maintain. The art, however, of composing those grand dances which are now so much admired, was for many years in a state of infancy, till Monsieur Noverre gave it a degree of perfection which it seems impossible to exceed. In an elaborate book upon the subject, this celebrated ballet-master and performer has with great eloquence

and ingenuity delineated the nature, objects, and powers of dancing, and shown how much it may be ennobled by an acquaintance with the kindred arts.

Ballets, he observes, have hitherto been only faint sketches of what they may one day become; for, as they constitute an art entirely subservient to taste and genius, they may receive daily variation and improvements. History, painting, mythology, poetry, all join to raise it from that obscurity in which it is buried, and it is only surprising that composers have hitherto disdained so many valuable accessories and resources. "If ballets, therefore," says he, "are for the most part uninteresting and uniformly dull; if they fail in the characteristic expression which constitutes their essence; the defect does not originate from the art itself, but should be ascribed to the artist. Are then the latter yet to learn that dancing is an imitative art? I am indeed inclined to think that they know it not, since we daily see them sacrifice the beauties of the dance, and give up the graceful *naïveté* of sentiment to become the servile copyists of a certain number of figures known and hackneyed for above a century.

"Ballet-masters should consult the productions of the most eminent painters. This would bring them nearer to nature, and induce them to avoid, as often as possible, that formality of figures which by repeating the object presents two different pictures on one and the same canvass. Such figures must give way to nature in what we call *ballets d'action.* An instance may serve to support and elucidate my argument.

"At the sudden and unexpected appearance of some young fauns, a troop of nymphs take themselves to flight with equal terror and precipitation. The former are in pursuit of the latter, with that eagerness which the very hope of pleasure can inspire. Now they stop to observe what impression they have made on the nymphs; these, at the same time, and for a similar reason, check their career: with fear they survey their pursuers, and endeavour to guess at their intentions and provide for a retreat to some spot where they may rest secure from the dangers that threaten them. Both troops now join, the nymphs resist, defend themselves, and at last effect their escape with no less swiftness than dexterity.

"This I call a busy active scene, in which the dance, as

it were, should speak with energy. Here studied and symmetrical figures cannot be introduced without a manifest violation of the truth, without weakening the action and lessening the effect. The scene should be conspicuous for its beautiful disorder, and the art of the composer must here be the handmaid of nature.

"Perhaps some ill-disposed critics, so far strangers to the art as not to judge of it from its various effects, will maintain that the above scene should pursue only two different objects; the one portrayed in the love-sick fauns, the other expressed by the affright of the nymphs. But how many shades may serve to embellish these pictures—how varied may be the strokes of the pencil? how opposite the lights—and what a number of tints ought to be employed in order to draw from this twofold situation a multiplicity of images, each more lively and spirited than the other! The truth of imitation and the skill of the painter should conspicuously appear in giving a different aspect to the features; some of them expressing a kind of ferocity, others betraying less eagerness; these casting a more tender look; and to the rest the languishing air of voluptuousness. The sketch of this first picture naturally leads to the composition of the second: here some nymphs appear divided between fear and desire; there some others express by the contrast of their attitudes the various emotions of the soul. This *ensemble* gives life to the whole picture, and is the more pleasing that it is perfectly consistent with nature. From this exposition you will not hesitate to agree with me that symmetry, the offspring of art itself, should never find place in the *ballet d'action.*

"I shall beg leave to inquire of all those who reason from habitual prejudice, whether they will look for their favourite symmetry in a herd of sheep flying from the wolf, or among wretched peasants leaving their huts and fields in order to shelter themselves from the fury of a party of enemies? Certainly not. But the art lies in concealing art itself; my aim is by no means to introduce disorder and confusion; on the contrary, I will have regularity even in irregularity What I most insist on is the introducing of well-concerted groups, situations forcibly expressed, but never beyond nature; and above all, a certain ease in the composition which betrays not the labour of the composer

"A ballet, perfect in all its parts," our author proceeds to observe, "is a picture drawn from life, of the manners, dresses, ceremonies, and customs of all nations. It must, therefore, be a complete pantomime, and through the eyes speak, as it were, to the very soul of the spectator. If it want expression, if it be deficient in point of situation and scenery, it degenerates into a spectacle equally flat and monotonous."

According to Plutarch a ballet is, if the expression may be allowed, a mute conversation, or a speaking and animated picture, whose language consists of motions, figures, and gestures, unlimited in their number, because there are no bounds to the varieties of expression. A well-composed ballet, therefore, may do without the assistance of speakers. M. Noverre indeed remarks, in the very spirit of his profession, that these only serve to weaken the action, and partly destroy its effects; and he declares that he has no opinion of a pantomime, which, in order to be understood, must borrow the help of verbal explanation. "Any ballet whatever," he says, "destitute of intrigue, action, and interest, displaying nothing more than the mechanical beauties of the art, and, though decorated with a pompous title, unintelligible throughout, is not unlike those portraits and pictures to which the painters of old subscribed the names of the personages and actions they meant to represent; because they were imperfect in point of imitation, the situations weakly expressed, the outlines incorrect, and the colours unseemly.

"When dancers shall feel, and, Proteus-like, transfer themselves into various shapes to express to the life the conflict of passions,—when their looks shall speak their inward sensations,—when, extending their arms beyond the narrow circle prescribed by pedantry, and with equal grace and judgment giving them a fuller scope, they shall by proper situations describe the gradual and successive progress of the passions; when, in fine, they call good sense and genius to the assistance of their art, then they may expect to distinguish themselves: explanatory speeches will become useless; a mute but powerful eloquence will be substituted to much better effect; each motion will be a sentence; every attitude will betray a situation; each gesture convey a thought, each glance a new sentiment; and

every part will please, because the whole will be a true and faithful imitation of nature."

Whether human beings can be found to realize this *beau ideal* of an accomplished dancer we cannot determine, not wishing to compromise ourselves upon a matter of such vital importance; but it must be confessed that the enthusiastic ballet-master disserts upon the subject *con gusto, con amore*. Had he written with his feet he could not have been more earnest, eloquent, and impressive, though we cannot help still suspecting that the eight parts of speech are capable of expressing our feelings more effectually and intelligibly than the five positions, however they may be imbued with a mute conversational power under the plastic modification of M. Noverre.

CHAPTER XVII.

Dancing, concluded.

"If an exercise so sociable and enlivening were to occupy some part of that time which is lavished on cards, would the youth of either sex be losers by it? I think not. It seems to me there can be no impropriety in it, any more than in modulating the voice into the most agreeable tones in singing, to which none, I think, will object. What is dancing, in the most rigid sense, but the harmony of motion rendered more palpable? Awkwardness, rusticity, ungraceful gestures, can never surely be meritorious."—*Fordyce's Sermons to Young Persons.*

From the preceding chapter it will appear that ballets are in some degree subject to the rules of poetical composition, though they differ from the regular drama by not requiring the three unities of time, place, and action. The ballet, therefore, may be termed the brother of the drama, unrestrained by those stricter regulations which only serve to cramp the imagination and confine genius. M. Noverre considers tragedy as the subject most suitable for the art of dancing, since it abounds in those noble incidents and situations which produce the best stage effects. Besides, the passions are more forcibly expressed in great characters, the imitation is of course less difficult, and the action in the

pantomime more significant, natural, and intelligible. The business of a skilful master (he observes) is to foresee, as it were, at one glance, the general effect that may result from the whole; and to forget for a while the principal characters of the drama. If his entire attention should be taken up with the parts of the first dancers of both sexes, the action is suspended, the scenes are slow in their progress, and the whole performance must fall short of its desired effect. Every thing that may thus tend to weaken the ballet ought to be carefully avoided, and only that number of actors should be introduced which is requisite for the proper execution of the performance, the whole of which must have its beginning, its middle, and its end, or, in other words, exposition, plot, and *denouement*.

In fine, a ballet-pantomime should be dramatic in all its parts; and the figure dancers, who succeed to the principal performers, ought to continue the scene, not by a number of symmetrical figures and studied steps, but by that kind of animated expression which keeps up the attention of the spectators to the main subject for which the preceding actors have prepared them. Yet, either through ignorance, or in consequence of a vitiated habit, there are but few well-supported ballets. Dance is introduced for the mere purpose of dancing; the end is supposed to be answered by the mechanical motion of the feet, or by high jumping; and inactive performers are introduced, who mix with and jostle each other, presenting a confused heap of pictures, sketched without taste, awkwardly grouped, and totally devoid of that harmony and expression, the offspring of the soul, which can alone embellish art by giving it life.

In considering the knowledge necessary for attaining perfection in this art, M. Noverre observes, "that mythology, ancient poetry, and chronology should form the primary studies of a ballet-master, who ought also to possess a genius for poetry and painting, since the art borrows all its charms from a perfect imitation of nature. A slight knowledge of geometry also cannot but prove highly advantageous, as it will help the master to introduce his figures in due proportion, to calculate exactly, and to execute with precision. By means of that unerring guide he will retrench every superfluous accessory, and thus enliven the performance.

Taste will introduce elegance, genius create variety, and judgment direct the whole.

"Ballets are often founded on preternatural subjects; several of these, particularly such as are taken from Ovid's Metamorphoses, will require the assistance of machinery, to secure the success of which, the ballet-master should himself be an expert machinist. None are to be found out of the capital but journeymen and scene-shifters, whose capacity scarcely extends beyond the first rudiments of carpentry. A ballet-master will often find himself greatly embarrassed, if, from his ignorance of the mechanical arts, he cannot convey his ideas with propriety, by constructing small models, which are better understood by the generality of workmen than the clearest verbal explanation.

"The theatres of Paris and London are the best supplied with these resources. The English are very ingenious, their stage machinery is more simplified than the French, and of course produces a quicker effect. Among them all works of this kind are most exquisitely finished, the neatness, care, and exactitude which are remarkable throughout every part greatly contributing to the precision of the whole. Those *chef-d'œuvres* of mechanism particularly display themselves in their pantomimes, which, however, are low and trivial, devoid of taste and interest, and built upon the meanest incidents. This kind of entertainment, which is got up at a prodigious expense, is only calculated for the vulgar, and would never succeed on the French theatre, where no other pleasantry is permitted but such as is compatible with decency and morality, and is recommended by its delicacy and its wit.

"A knowledge of anatomy will serve to render more clear and intelligible the precepts which the ballet-master has to lay down for his pupils. It will enable him to distinguish between the natural and the habitual defects in their conformation, which so often impede the progress of young beginners. Drawing is so useful in the composition of ballets, that the master cannot dispense with that accomplishment; it will contribute to the beauty of the forms, will give to the figures an air of novelty and elegance, will animate the groups, and show the attitudes in a just precision. That he must be a proficient in music it is not necessary to repeat. Unless he is endued with that sensi-

bility of organ, which is more commonly the gift of nature than the result of art, study, or application, he will not enter into the spirit or character of his airs, nor be able to regulate the motions of his dancers with that delicate accordance which is absolutely indispensable. If this knowledge is combined with taste, he will either set the music himself, or at least furnish the composer with the principal outlines to characterize the action of the dancer. Music well composed should paint and speak; and the dance set to those sounds will be, as it were, the echo to repeat the words. If, on the contrary, it be mute, if it speak not to the ear of the dancer, then all sentiment and expression are banished from the performance.

"To insist that the ballet-master should be a proficient in all these studies would be requiring too much. All that can be deemed strictly requisite is a slight tincture of those sciences which by their connexion with his art may contribute to its perfection; for there can be no doubt that the ballet-master will ennoble his composition with the most fire, spirit, liveliness, and interest who possesses the greatest share of genius and imagination, and whose knowledge is the most various and extensive."

The architect who, in enumerating the requisites for his profession, began by saying that a builder ought to be a good lawyer, in order that he might be sure of the validity of his title to the ground, before he erected his house, had but a narrow estimate of his art in comparison with M. Noverre, who seems to have imagined that no man could deserve the name of a ballet-master, unless he were a species of admirable Crichton. When we refer to his public triumphant coronation on the stage, we can scarcely wonder that he should form a lofty, not to say an overweening estimate of the importance of that pursuit, his success in which had procured him a higher popularity and more flattering honours than the phlegmatic English are in the habit of bestowing upon their most distinguished poets, heroes, and statesmen. Pre-eminence in dancing and in the composition of ballets is willingly conceded to the French by all the world, and M. Noverre was perhaps excusably jealous of the national honour, as well as naturally influenced by personal vanity, when he exalted, somewhat extravagantly

it must be confessed, the profession of which he was so distinguished and unrivalled an ornament.

Others, however, have maintained, not less strenuously than himself, the capability of dancing not only to express all the human passions, but to characterize the movements of allegorical and supernatural personifications. A French author tells us, with a solemnity becoming the subject, that the *pas* called the *gargouillade* is devoted to the *entrée* of *winds, demons, and elementary spirits!* It is formed by wheeling on either side a half-*pirouette*, on both feet. One leg then rising, makes almost simultaneously a turn outward, the other inward; the dancer lights on the same leg with which he commenced, and forms the other half-pirouette with the one that remains in the air. This step, being composed of two turns, is seldom equally well performed on both sides. The celebrated Dupré, at Paris, used to dance the *gargouillade* excellently among the demons, but he gave it less elevation than is practised at present.

It was performed in the most exquisite manner by Madame Lionnois, who, in the character of *Hatred*, figured with Monsieur Dupré's *Despair*, in the fourth act of *Zoroaster*. She is the first female dancer who has accomplished this difficult and hazardous step, which is considered so peculiarly and admirably calculated to inspire terror on the entrance of spirits.

Another ingenious Frenchman, in his enthusiasm for the national art, goes so far as to assert that it is a mere prejudice to suppose there is any thing ridiculous in expressing fear, anger, sorrow, and indeed all the passions, and even the agonies of death, by singing and dancing, which he maintains to be the most natural and forcible modes of representing all the violent feelings. "Let," says he, "a company of Italian singers be cast away on a desolate island, and let them people it themselves with a new race of beings, who should never hear any other language nor see any other gestures than those in use at the opera; you would soon perceive what an improvement they would exhibit in education and behaviour; you would find that those brought up under such advantages would look down with the same contempt upon the best-bred youths of the present system, as these do on our country clodhoppers; and that

their ears and eyes, formed upon such models, and accustomed to so much harmony and grace, would be immediately shocked by the dissonance of our tones of speech, and the awkwardness of all our steps and actions."

That other dancing-masters besides M. Noverre have a lofty sense of their own high profession, and of the respect and reverence with which they should be consequently treated, will be seen by the following extract from a work entitled "Chorography, or the Art of Dance-writing"—Remark as to the lesson:

"It is the duty of the scholar to go to meet the master when he arrives, and to receive him with the utmost politeness: in doing this, he must observe to make two bows—one very profound, the other not quite so low:—he will then cause him to be shown into the room, and offer him a *fauteuil* or a chair:—as soon as he is seated, the young lady or gentleman, whichever the scholar may happen to be, will present him both hands, place himself in the first position, and make four more reverences, the first very profound, the second less so, and the same of the other two; with the knees well divided, and the heels firm to the ground.

"After this salutation, the young lady or gentleman, whichever it may happen to be, will march forward and backward—to the right—to the left—sideways, or any way the master may direct.

"The lesson finished, the scholar will reconduct the master to the door of the apartment, and then make him two more bows, one very low, the second less so, and will thank him in the politest manner for the kind attention he has bestowed and the trouble he has so obligingly taken, &c. &c."

Would not any one imagine that these kit-carriers, these heroes of the heel, these tyrants of the toe, whom

> The captain salutes with a congé profound,
> While her ladyship court'sies half-way to the ground,

were generous enough to bestow their lessons at their intrinsic value—that is to say, gratuitously? Not they! Provided they are foreigners, or have a French termination to their name, they may safely demand a more exorbitant price than would be paid for lessons in the most important

studies from the first philosopher of the age; and English parents will cheerfully lavish upon these brainless caperers of the continent what they would grudge to a college professor of their own nation. Strange that we should witness M. Gardel's ballet of the *Dansomanie*, and not perceive that the "capering monsieur from active France" is turning us into ridicule, and laughing at us to our face, for suffering him and others of his countrymen to pick our pockets. The satyrs, we know, were dancers, whence M. Gardel, perhaps, inferred that dancers might write satires even upon their patrons and supporters.

M. Noverre, from whom we have so largely quoted, is perpetually calling upon artists, masters, and pupils to imitate nature, and yet in the following passage he seems to admit that the art he is celebrating owes its chief excellence to an unnatural distortion.—"To perfection in dancing nothing is more necessary than the outward turn of the high; yet nothing is more natural to mankind than the contrary position; it is born with us. It will be superfluous in establishing this truth to cite for example the Asiatics, the Africans, or any people who dance, or rather leap and move without art or principle. If we attend only to children, or the rustic inhabitants of the villages, we shall see that they all turn their feet inwardly. The other position is purely invention; and the proof of its being only the result of tuition and pains is, that a painter would transgress as much against nature as the rules of his art, were he to place the feet of his portrait in the situation of a dancer's. It is plain, then, that to dance elegantly, walk gracefully, or address ourselves with ease and manliness, we must absolutely reverse the nature of things; and force our limbs by artificial applications, equally tedious and painful, to assume a very different situation from what they originally received. Such a change, however necessary in this art, can only be accomplished by laying its foundation in the earliest stages of infancy, when every bone and muscle is in a state of pliability, and capable of receiving any direction which we choose to give it.

"Music and dancing," continues the eloquent ballet-master, "are kindred arts; the tender and harmonious accents of the one excite and produce the agreeable and expressive motions of the other, and their union entertains

the eye and ear with animated pictures of sentiments; these two senses again convey to the heart the interesting images which affect them; while the heart in its turn communicates them to the mental faculty: thus the pleasure resulting from the harmony and intelligence of these two arts enchants the spectator, and fills him with the most seducing pleasures of voluptuousness."

After this grandiloquent peroration we must dismiss M. Noverre, respectfully tendering to his memory those four profound reverences which, we are taught, should be the invariable homage offered to so august a personage as a dancing-master!

Other teachers of this art, having observed that music was capable of being pursued and conveyed by written characters, imagined by analogy that the like advantage might be extended to the composition of dances. Upon this plan they attempted what is called *chorography*, an art which they suppose to have been utterly unknown to the ancients, or not transmitted to us from them. The track or figure of a dance may indeed be determined by diagrams and engraved lines, but these will necessarily appear so perplexing, so intricate, so difficult, if not impossible, to seize in their various relations, that they will only disgust and discourage, instead of conveying any satisfactory or retainable instruction.

We have spoken of the restoration of dancing as a polite art at the revival of literature; but however rude and uncultivated might be its nature, and however little it may seem to be adapted to the genius of our countrymen, it seems never to have been out of favour and fashion in England. In the middle ages it was reckoned among the genteel accomplishments necessary to be acquired by both sexes; and in the romances of those times the character of a hero was incomplete unless he danced excellently. This recreation was constantly put in practice among the nobility upon days of festivity, and was countenanced by the example of the court. After the coronation-dinner of Richard II., the king, the prelates, the nobles, the knights, and the rest of the company danced in Westminster Hall to the music of the minstrels. Sir John Hawkins mentions a dance called pavon, from pavo—a peacock, which might have been proper for such an occasion. "It is," says he,

"a grave and majestic movement; the method of dancing it anciently was by gentlemen dressed in caps and swords, by those of the long robe in their gowns, by the peers in their mantles, and by the ladies in gowns with long trains, the motion whereof in dancing resembled that of a peacock." Several of our monarchs are praised for their skill in dancing, and none of them more than Henry VIII., who was peculiarly partial to this fashionable exercise. In his time and in that of his daughter Elizabeth, the English in general are said to have been good dancers; and this commendation is not denied to them even by foreign writers. Polydore Virgil praises the English for their skill in dancing; and Hentzner offers a similar testimony to our saltatory skill.

In their attachment to this recreation the common people imitated their superiors; and it appears that neither the grave doctor nor the reverend priest could deny themselves the gratification of now and then "sporting a toe." For this inculpation, as some may perchance deem it, we have the authority of the Ship of Fooles, as paraphrased by Barclay:

> The priestes and clerkes to dance have no shame,
> The frere or monke, in his frocke and cowle,
> Must daunce; and the doctor lepeth to play the foole.

Stow laments the abolition of the holyday evening dance which he remembered to have seen in his youth, and considered it as not only innocent in itself, but as a preventive to worse deeds, which he feared would follow the suppression.

In Shakspeare's Henry V., the Duke of Bourbon, alluding to the military inferiority of his countrymen, exclaims:

> Our madams mock at us;
> They bid us to the English dancing schools,
> And teach lavoltas high and swift corantos,
> Saying our grace is only in our heels,
> And that we are most lofty runaways.

Whence we not only gather that the French were then, as now, the principal teachers of this art in our schools, but we learn the name of two of the most fashionable dances of the time. The lavolta, says Mr. Douce, is of Italian origin, as its name implies. The man turns the woman

round several times, and then assists her in making a high spring or cabriole. This dance passed from Italy into Provence and the rest of France, and thence into England. M. Bodin, an advocate in the parliament of Paris, and a very savage and credulous writer on demonology, has gravely ascribed its importation into France to the power of witches. It seems to have borne some resemblance to the modern waltz, at least in its effects, if we may judge from the observations of Arbeau, a French writer, who, after giving directions for conducting this dance as decorously as possible, adds, " Ce fait, vous ferez par ensemble les tours de la volte, comme ç'y dessus a esté dit: et après avoir tournoyé par tant de cadançes qu'il vous plaira, restituerez la demoiselle en sa place, ou elle sentira (quelque bonne contenance qu'elle fasse) son cerveau est branlé, plein de vertigues et tournoyements de teste, et vous n'en aurez peult estre pas moins. Je vous laisse à considerer si c'est chose bien seante à une jeune fille, et si en cette volte l'honneur et la santé y sont pas hasardez et interessez."

During the civil wars, and under the sway of the gloomy puritans, dancing, like other sports and pastimes, suffered a temporary eclipse only to revive with greater splendour at the Restoration. From the time of the merry monarch to our own days this recreation has never for a moment been out of favour and fashion, though it has frequently varied in its modes. Beau Nash, who was for so many years master of the ceremonies at Bath, may be considered the founder of modern ball-room dancing, which has been divested of much of its formality and improved in various other respects since the time of that singular person. Let it not be understood, however, that we include among the improvements the discontinuance of the graceful minuet, derived to us, perhaps, from the stately pavon of former times.

The French country dances, or *contre-danses* (from the parties being placed opposite to each other), since called quadrilles, from their having four sides, which approximate nearly to the cotillon, were first introduced into France about the middle of Louis XV.'s reign. Previously to this period the dances most in vogue were la perigourdine, la matelotte, la pavane, les forlanes, minuets, &c. Quadrilles, when first introduced, were danced by four persons only; four

more were soon added, and thus the complete square was formed, but the figures varied materially from those of the present period. The gentlemen advanced with the opposite ladies, menaced each other with the fore-fingers, and retired clapping their hands three times; they then turned hands of four, turned their own partners, and *grand rond* of all concluded the figure. From this period the art of dancing may be said to have degenerated rather than advanced, until the time of the French Revolution, when the splendid apartments of the Hotel de Richelieu were opened as dancing-rooms for the accommodation of the higher classes. A band of twenty-four eminent musicians was found, tunes were composed in different keys, with full orchestral accompaniments, a new era commenced in dancing, the old figures were abolished, and stage steps were adopted. Minuets and forlanes were still continued, but M. Vestris displaced the latter by the gavotte, which was first danced at a fête given by a lady of celebrity at the Hotel de Valentinois, rue St. Lazar, on the 16th of August, 1797, upon which occasion M. Hullin introduced an entirely new set of figures of his own composition. These elicited general approbation, they were danced at all parties, and still retain their pre-eminence. The names of pantalon, l'été, la poule, la Trenis, &c., which were given to the tunes, have been applied to the figures. The figure of la Trenis was introduced by desire of M. Trenis, it being part of a gavotte danced in the favourite ballet of Nina.

Practised by Jupiter himself, the saltipotent monarch of Olympus, forming a distinguishing attribute of Apollo, the orchestes, or dancer *par excellence*, as Pindar calls him, and deemed a divine art by the ancient sages and philosophers, dancing, even in the degenerate days of the moderns, has been held in a becoming reverence, and distinguished by many flattering, though perhaps inadequate honours. We have alluded to the public and enthusiastic coronation of M. Noverre, whose head, usurping the guerdon that belonged more especially to his heels, was wreathed with laurel for the composition of a successful ballet; we have seen opera figurantes evince such incontestable proofs, in their pirouettes and entrechats, of their possessing all the conjugal and domestic virtues, that they have obtained peers for husbands, and have been removed to cut capers for the

special delight of the aristocracy, when the most exquisite singers and musicians failed to command silence at the opera; we know that the whole enraptured theatre was hushed in a breathless dumb delight, the moment the younger Vestris commenced a *pas seul;* and now, in order that his posthumous renown may even transcend his living glories, a not unworthy bard, "Thespiadom decus immortale sororum," has embalmed and apotheosised his memory in a mock-heroic poem, which, taking this *dieu de la danse* for its sponsor and inspirer, celebrates his praises with a happy combination of learned research, sparkling wit, and mellifluous poetry.* From this work we shall extract a few passages as a pleasant and appropriate peroration to our chapters upon dancing.† Vestris, summoned into the presence of the Queen of England, at Windsor, claims freedom of speech as the peculiar privilege of the land to which he has become a visiter, and then ventures to draw the following unfavourable portrait of the natives:

> See but how *gauche* they enter a saloon,
> Almost enough, I vow, to make one swoon!
> Whene'er I meet them at a ball or play,
> I'm half-disposed to turn another way.—
> You call them statesmen, and you call them true,
> So mighty stately in whate'er they do;
> Born bankers, coachmen, bruisers, financiers—
> But dance they cannot,—no, not for their ears!
> The plants the Graces set but ill succeed,
> Or on the Thames, the Liffey, or the Tweed:
> Cross the North Sea,—the German, Swede, and Dane,
> Of clumsy feats ridiculously vain,
> Twirl, as they simper round their Gothic halls,
> Their frowsy juffrouws in a vulgar waltz;
> Or trampling loudly with tumultous heel,
> Shake the rude rafters with the clattering reel.—
> But for the French, kind nature from their birth
> Elastic *soles* prepares that spurn the earth;
> With prodigality of hand has given
> Heads that aspire beyond the clouds of heaven;
> Has given an air, &c.
>
> Canto ii. p. 75.

Vestris challenges his rival Duport to a public trial of

* See The Vestriad, a poem, by Hans Busk, Esq., author of "The Banquet," "The Dessert," &c. London, 1819.

† Of which the materials have been chiefly compiled from The Vestriad and its notes, Strutt's Sports and Pastimes, Douce's Illustrations of Shakspeare, &c.; but more especially from an elaborate article in the Encyclopædia Britannica, founded upon the work of M. Noverre.

skill on the boards of the Parisian opera, which is thus described.

Hark! hark! what prodigy their transports hushes,
Ajax again across the welkin rushes;—
So fluent spins, so voluble he wheels,
Th' unconscious floor his touch no longer feels;
With nice precision and with just command,
Through air he steers, and scarcely deigns to land;—
Terpsichore exults, nay, all the nine
Lean from their boxes and exclaim "divine!"
Apollo, bending from the lofty dome,
Prepares to snatch him to the heavenly home,
With silver fingers sweeps the golden lyre,
And breathes o'er all his frame ethereal fire.—
Now both the heroes, with extended toe,
On the loose air their weight corporeal throw,
Together wind the whirling pirouette,
Like tiptoe Mercuries on an old gazette,
Full three times ten revolving on one knee,
Then on the other axis ten times three,
With simultaneous heat and concrete graces,
Their backs alternately eclipse their faces.
Ajax at length his cyclick labour ends,
And his firm person on one leg extends.—
His rival, to secure his tottering frame,
Leans for support towards the Paphian dame;
But from distraction, or some secret cause,
Her proffer'd aid she fatally withdraws.
Still with one *entrechat* he tempts his fate,
But the last struggle comes, alas! too late.
No more his *sole* aspires the sky to reach,
His treacherous heels his failing skill impeach,
By one false movement all his strength betray'd,
He and his towering hopes are prostrate laid.

Here ends the dancer, demigod, and sage,
Europe's delight—the wonder of the age!
On the cold ground his beauteous figure lies,
No more to rise and dance before our eyes:
He whose proud boast enlarged the bounds of art,
And taught the feet to climb above the heart,
Whose radiant track with emanations bright,
Mark'd a new era in this age of light.

Canto v. p. 215, 221.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Morris-dancers.

"It was my hap of late, by chance,
To meet a country morris-dance,
When cheefest of them all, the foole,
Play'd with a ladle and a toole;
But when the hobby-horse did wihy,
Then all the wenches gave a tihy;
But when they gan to shake their boxe,
And not a goose could catch a foxe,
The piper then put up his pipes,
And all the woodcocks lookt like snipes."
Cobbe's Prophecies, 4to. London, 1614.

Both English and foreign glossaries, observes Mr. Douce,* uniformly ascribe the origin of this dance to the Moors, although the genuine Moorish or Morisco dance was, no doubt, very different from the European morris. Strutt, in his Sports and Pastimes, has cited a passage in the Play of Variety, 1649, in which the Spanish morisco is mentioned; and this, Mr. Douce adds, not only shows the legitimacy of the term *morris*, but that the real and uncorrupted Moorish dance was to be found in Spain, where it still continues to delight both natives and foreigners under the name of the fandango. The Spanish morris was also danced at puppet-shows, by a person habited like a Moor, with castanets; and Junius has informed us that the dancers usually blackened their faces with soot, that they might the better pass for Moors.† We have already shown that both cards and chess, in their progress to us from the east, underwent considerable changes and modifications, and it will be seen that the dance of which we are writing received, in like

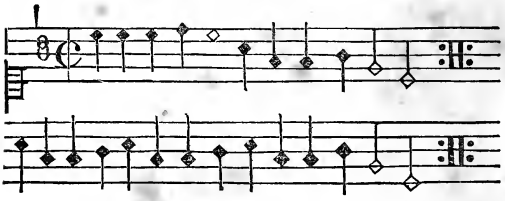
* In a Dissertation on the ancient English morris-dance, at the end of the second volume of his Illustrations of Shakspeare; whence we have largely borrowed.

† Brand's Popular Antiquities, vol. i. p. 208.

manner, various alterations from the original form. At one period it was mixed with the Pyrrhic, or sword dance, which by some means or other got introduced into England, where it was generally exhibited by women. A performance of this nature seems to be alluded to in the second part of King Henry VI., act iii. scene 1:

> ————I have seen him
> Caper upright like a wild Morisco,
> Shaking the bloody darts, as he his bells.

Tabourot, the oldest and most curious writer on the art of dancing, says, that in his youthful days, about the beginning of the sixteenth century, it was the custom in good societies for a boy to come into the hall when supper was finished, with his face blackened, his forehead bound with white or yellow taffeta, and bells tied to his legs. He then proceeded to dance the morisco, the whole length of the hall, backward and forward, to the great amusement of the company. This was the ancient and uncorrupted morris-dance, the more modern sort of which he afterward describes, and gives the following as the air to which it was performed:



It has been supposed that the morris-dance was first brought into England in the reign of Edward III., and when John of Gaunt returned from Spain; but it is much more probable that we had it from our Gallic neighbours, or the Flemings. About the time of Henry VII. and VIII., we have abundant materials for showing that the morris-dance made a very considerable figure in the parochial festivals. The May-games of Robin Hood, which appear to have been principally instituted for the encouragement of archery,

were generally accompanied by morris-dancers, who formed nevertheless but a subordinate part of the ceremony. Other festivals and ceremonies had their morris;—as Holy Thursday; the Whitsun-ales; the Bride-ales, or weddings; and a sort of play, or pageant, called the Lord of Misrule. Of the latter an account has been handed down to us by a puritanical writer of Queen Elizabeth's time, who thus describes the pastime: "First, all the wilde heads of the parish, flocking together, chuse them a graund captaine (of mischief), whome they innoble with the title of *My Lord of Misrule*, and him they crowne with great solemnitie, and adopt for their king. This king annoynted, chooseth foorth twentie, fourtie, threescore, or a hundred lustie guttes like to himself, to wait upon his lordly majestie, and to guarde his noble person. Then every one of these his men he invesseth with his liveries of greene, yellow, or some other light wanton collour. And as though that were not gawdy ynough, they bedecke themselves with scarffes, ribands, and laces, hanged all over with golde ringes, precious stones, and other jewels. This done, they tie about their legge twentie or fourtie belles, with rich handkerchiefe in their hands, and sometimes laide across over their shoulders and neckes, borrowed for the most part of their pretie *mopsies* and loving Bessies, for bussing them in the darke. Thus all things set in order, then have they their hobby-horses, their dragons, and other antiques, together with ther bandie pipers and thundering drummers, to strike up the *devil's daunce* withall. Then march this heathen company towards the church and church-yarde, their pypers pyping, their drummers thundering, their stumpes dauncing, their belles iyngling, their handkerchiefes fluttering about their heades like madde men, their hobbie-horses and other monsters skirmishing among the throng; and in this sorte they goe to the church (though the minister be at prayer or preaching), dauncing and swinging their handkerchiefes over their heades in the church, like devils incarnate, with such a confused noyse that no man can heare his owne voyce. Then the foolish people they looke, they stere, they laugh, they fleere, and mount upon forms and pewes to see these goodly pageants solemnised in this sort. Then after this, about the church they goe againe and againe, and so fourth into the church-yard, where they have commonly their summer

haules, their bowers, arbours, and banquetting houses set up, wherein they feaste, banquet, and daunce all that day, and peradventure, all that night too. And thus these terrestrial furies spend the sabboth day. Another sort of fantasticall fooles bring to these hellhounds (the Lord of Misrule and his accomplices), some bread, some good ale, some new cheese, some old cheese, some custard, some cracknels, some cakes, some flaunes, some tarts, some cream, some meat, some one thing, some another; but if they knewe that as often as they bring anye to the maintenance of these execrable pastimes, they offer sacrifice to the devill and sathanas, they would repent and withdraw their hands, which God graunt they may."* It is probable that when the practice of archery declined, the May-games of Robin Hood were discontinued, and that the morris-dance was transferred to the celebration of Whitsuntide, either as connected with the Whitsun-ales or as a separate amusement. In the latter instance it appears to have retained one or two of the characters in the May-pageants, but the arrangement doubtless varied in different places according to the humour or convenience of the parties.

The painted-glass window at Betley, in Staffordshire, exhibits in all probability the oldest as well as most curious representation of an English May-game and morris-dance that is any where to be found. It has been assigned to the time of Edward IV., and enables us to ascertain some of the personages of which the May-games and morris consisted at the period of its execution. To trace, with any accuracy, their original forms and numbers, or the progressive changes they have undergone, would be impossible. Sometimes we have a lady of the May, simply with a Friar Tuck; and in later times a Maid Marian remained without even a Robin Hood or a Friar. The more ancient May-game and morris consisted of the following characters: Robin Hood, Little John, Friar Tuck, Maid Marian, the queen or lady of the May, the fool, the piper, and several morris-dancers, habited, as it appears, in various modes. Afterward a hobby-horse and a dragon were added.

Robin Hood is too well known to need any description. Little John, his faithfül companion, is first mentioned by

* Stubbes's Anatomie of Abuses.

Fordun, the Scottish historian, who wrote in the fourteenth century, and speaks of these persons in the theatrical performances of his time, and of the minstrels' songs relating to them, which he says the common people preferred to all other romances. Of Friar Tuck there is no very ancient mention, and his history is uncertain. He is known to have formed one of the May-game characters during the reign of Henry VIII., and is probably of much earlier origin. It is surmised that the term is derived from the dress of the order, which was *tucked* or folded at the waist, by means of a cord or girdle. Thus Chaucer, in his preface to the Canterbury Tales, says, "*Tucked* he was, as is a freere about." This friar maintained his situation in the morris under the reign of Elizabeth, but is not heard of afterward. In Ben Jonson's Mask of Gipsies, the clown takes notice of his being omitted in the dance.

Maid Marian. Bishop Percy and Mr. Stevens agree in making this character the mistress of Robin Hood, an opinion which the latter supports by the following quotation from the old play of "The Downfall of Robert, Earl of Huntingdon, 1601," whence it would appear that Maid Marian was originally a name assumed by Matilda, the daughter of Lord Fitzwalter, when Robin Hood remained in a state of outlawry.

> Next 'tis agreed (if thereto she agree)
> That faire Matilda henceforth change her name,
> And while it is the chance of Robin Hoode
> To live in Sherewodde a poor outlaw's life,
> She by Maide Marian's name be only call'd.
>
> *Mat.*—I am contented, reade on little John.
> Henceforth let me be named Maide Marian.

Mr. Douce, however, who considers this story as a dramatic fiction, observes that none of the materials of the more authentic history of Robin Hood prove the existence of any such person in the character of his mistress. There is a French pastoral drama so early as the eleventh or twelfth century, in which the principal characters are Robin and Marion, a shepherd and shepherdess. The latter name, which never occurs in the page of English history, and was probably imported from France, is not compounded of Mary and Anne, but forms a corruption, as it is conjectured, of

Miriam the prophetess, whose dancing women, with their timbrels, may have suggested the first notion of the female morris-dancer. Maid Marian not only officiated as the paramour of Robin Hood in the May-games, but as the queen or lady of the May, who seems to have been introduced long before the name of the bold outlaw was known, and who may be deemed the legitimate representative of the goddess Flora in the Roman festival. She was usually dressed according to the fashion of the time, holding a flower in her hand, and wearing a fancy coronet. Her gait was nice and affected. Thus, in the old ballad of the Miller of Mansfield:

> And so they jetted down towards the king's hall:
> The merry old miller with his hands on his side,
> His wife, like Maid Marion, did *mince* at that tide.

In the time of Elizabeth, when the morris had degenerated into a piece of coarse buffoonery, and this once elegant queen of May was personated by a clownish boy, she obtained the name of *Malkin*, and was thus assimilated to a vulgar drudge or scullion; but during the whole of her existence mirth and gayety were her constant companions nor was this character, even in later times, uniformly vulgar. Our poets and pastoral writers, up to a comparatively recent period, thought they could not pay a higher compliment to the fair object of their admiration than to crown her as queen of the May.*

The Fool, in point of dress, was the same as the domestic buffoon of his time, with the addition of bells to his arms and ankles. In the absence of some of the other characters of the morris-dance, the exertions of the fool appear to have been increased, as we learn from Ben Jonson's *Entertainment at Althrope*.

> But see, the hobby-horse is forgot,
> Foole, it must be your lot,
> To supply his want with faces
> And some other buffoon graces.

In the modern morris-dance the fool is continued, but his real character and dress have been long since forgotten, though their history may not be altogether unworthy of a

* Cunningham's mellifluous poem on this subject is, perhaps, the last

passing reminiscence. "According to the illuminators of the thirteenth century, he bears the squalid appearance of a wretched idiot, wrapped in a blanket which scarcely covers his nakedness, holding in one hand a stick with an inflated bladder attached to it by a cord, which answered the purpose of a bawble. If we view him in his more improved state, where his clothing is somewhat better, yet his tricks are so exceedingly barbarous and vulgar that they would disgrace the most despicable Jack Pudding that ever exhibited at Bartholomew Fair; and even when he was more perfectly equipped in his party-coloured coat and hood, and completely decorated with bells, his improvements add but little to his respectability, and still less do they qualify him as a companion for kings and noblemen."

"In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the fool, or more properly the jester, was a man of some ability; and if his character has been strictly drawn by Shakspeare and other dramatic writers, the entertainment he afforded consisted in witty retorts and sarcastic reflections; and his license seems upon such occasions to have been very extensive."*

Tom the Piper, an obvious and necessary attendant upon dancers, requires very little illustration. Spenser, in his third eclogue, speaking of the rhymes of bad poets, observes that "Tom Piper makes as little melodie;" whence we are to infer that his music was not usually of the very best kind.

The hobby-horse, as has been already observed, was often omitted in the morris. During the reign of Queen Elizabeth the puritans made sad havoc among the May-games by their preachings and invectives. Poor Maid Marian was assimilated to the scarlet abomination of Babylon; Friar Tuck was deemed a remnant of popery, and the hobby-horse an impious and Pagan superstition. King James's Book of Sports restored the lady and the hobby-horse, but during the commonwealth they were again attacked by a new set of fanatics and were suppressed, together with the whole of the May festivities, Whitsun-ales, &c. At the Restoration they were once more

* Strutt's Complete View of the Dress and Habits of the People of England, vol. ii. p. 313.

revived. The hobby-horse was represented by a man equipped with as much pasteboard as was sufficient to form the head and hinder parts of a horse, the quadrupedal deficiencies being concealed by a long footcloth that nearly touched the ground. On this occasion the performer exerted all his skill in burlesque horsemanship. In Sampson's play of the Vowbreaker, 1636, a miller, being angry that the major of the city is put in competition with him in enacting this character, says, "Have I practised my reines, my careeres, my pranckers, my ambles, my false trots, my Canterbury paces, and shall master major put me beside the hobby-horse? Have I borrowed the fore-horse bells, his plumes, and braveries, nay, had his mane new shorn and frizzled, and shall the major put me beside the hobby-horse?"

To the horse's mouth was suspended a ladle for the purpose of gathering money from the spectators, an office which in later times was performed by the fool. In Nashe's play of *Summer's Last Will and Testament*, there enter three clowns and three maids who dance the morris, and at the same time sing the following song:

Trip and goe, heave and hoe,
Up and downe, to and fro,
From the towne to the grove,
Two and two, let us rove,
A Maying, a playing;
Love hath no gainsaying,
So merrily trip and goe.

A short time before the Revolution in France, the May-games and morris-dance were celebrated in many parts of that country, accompanied by a fool and a hobby-horse, termed a *chevalet;* and, if the authority of Minsheu be not questionable, the Spaniards had the same character, under the name of the Tarasca.

The Dragon is introduced in Sampson's play of the Vow-breaker, as early as 1633, where a fellow says, "I'll be a fiery dragon;" and another observes, that he will be "a thundering St. George as ever rode on horseback." This seems to afford a clew to the use of the dragon, who was probably attacked in some ludicrous manner by the hobby horse saint.

In the reign of Henry VIII. the morris-dancers were

dressed in gilt leather and silver paper, and sometimes in coats of white and spangled fustian. They had purses in their girdles, and garters to which bells were attached, varying in number from twenty to forty, and distinguished by different appellations, as the fore bell, the second bell, the treble, the tenor, the bass, and the double bell. Sometimes the hat was decorated with a nosegay, or with the herb *thrift*, formerly called *our lady's cushion*. A very few years since a company of morris-dancers, attended by a boy, Maid Marian, a hobby-horse, and a fool, was seen at Usk, in Monmouthshire, where they profess to have kept up this ceremony for the last three hundred years. This, and one or two other modern instances, Mr. Douce has thought it proper to record in the dissertation to which we have been so largely indebted, because he thinks it extremely probable "that from the present rage for refinement and innovation, there will remain in the course of a short time but few vestiges of our popular customs and antiquities."

CHAPTER XIX.

Jugglers.

"*Gardener.*—Prythee, John, what sort of a creature is a conjurer?
Butler.—Why, he's made much as other men are, if it was not for his long gray beard. His beard is at least half a yard long; he's dressed in a strange dark cloak, as black as a coal. He has a long white wand in his hand.
Coachman.—I fancy it is made out of witch elm.
Butler.—No; the wand, look you, is to make a circle. A circle, you must know, is a conjurer's trap. *The Drummer.*

Should any utilitarian reader blame us for wasting our time and his upon a class of people not often deemed either respectable or useful, we beg to refer him to the third volume of the History of Inventions, by Professor Beckmann, who vindicates their cause, including in his defence, under the general denomination of Jugglers, the rope-dancers, and such as exhibit feats of uncommon strength. At a moment like the present, when from the effects of a

redundant population every useful employment is full, and even overstocked, his arguments ought to be considered cogent, at least by the political economists.

These arts, he observes, are not unprofitable, for they afford a comfortable subsistence to those who practise them, which they usually spend upon the spot, and this he considers a good reason why their stay in a place ought to be encouraged. He is also of opinion, that if the arts of juggling served no other end than to amuse the most ignorant of our citizens, it is proper that they should be patronised for the sake of those who cannot enjoy the more expensive deceptions of an opera, especially as they often convey instruction in the most acceptable manner, and serve as an antidote to superstition. In these observations we fully concur, holding that it is wise on every account to preserve the few harmless amusements still left to the poor; and as to the trite objection that it is cajoling them of their hard-earned pittance by useless deceptions, we reply that their money is much better thus expended than in the gin-shop or the ale-house, to which they are already too much driven by the curtailment of their appropriate recreations.

Juggling is certainly of very great antiquity. Pharaoh's magicians may be deemed the earliest practitioners of the art. Some of the slaves in Sicily performed the deception of breathing out flames about 150 years before the Christian era; and according to Plutarch, Alexander the Great was astonished and delighted with the secret effects of naphtha, exhibited to him at Ecbatana. Wonder has been excited in modern times by persons who could walk over burning coals or hot iron, which is easily done by rendering the skin of the feet callous and insensible. Beckmann asserts that the Hirpi who dwelt near Rome jumped through burning coals; that women were accustomed to perform a similar exploit at Castabala, near the temple of Diana; that the exhibition of cups and balls is often mentioned in the works of the ancients; and that the various feats of horsemanship exhibited in our circuses passed, in the thirteenth century, from Egypt to the Byzantine court, and thence over all Europe.

The *joculator* or *jongleur* of the Normans, whence was derived the juggler of more modern times, received about the fourteenth century the name of *tragetour*, a term mo-

especially applied to those performers who, by sleight of hand, with the assistance of various machines and confederates, deceived the eyes of the spectators and produced illusions that were usually attributed to enchantment. According to the descriptions transmitted to us, the wonders they performed prove them to have been no mean practitioners in the art, and excite the less surprise that in a credulous age they should have been ranked with magicians. Chaucer, who had no doubt frequently seen the tricks he describes, thus speaks of them: "There are," says he, "sciences by which men can delude the eye with divers appearances, such as the subtle tragetours perform at feasts. In a large hall they will produce water, with boats rowed up and down upon it. Sometimes they will bring in the similitude of a grim lion, or make flowers spring up as in a meadow; sometimes they cause a vine to flourish bearing white and red grapes, or show a castle built with stone; and, when they please, they cause the whole to disappear."

He then speaks of a learned clerk, who, for the amusement of his friend, showed to him forests full of wild deer, where he saw a hundred of them slain, some with hands and some with arrows: the hunting being finished, a company of falconers appeared upon the banks of a fair river, where the birds pursued the herons and slew them. He then saw knights jousting upon a plain; and, by way of conclusion, the resemblance of his beloved lady dancing. But when the master who had wrought this magic thought fit, he clapped his hands, and all was gone in an instant. If these illusions were not produced by means of a magic lantern or some similar device, they must be confessed to equal all that is recorded of the ancient Eleusinian mysteries. Chaucer attributes such deceptions to natural magic; meaning probably some occult combination of natural powers: a solution which would hardly pass current with the vulgar in those days, when the properties of matter and of the elements were very little understood.

Froissart records a scarcely less marvellous instance of a juggler, who possessed not, however, the art of saving his own head from the block. "When the Duke of Anjou and the Earl of Savoy," says that author, "were lying with their army before the city of Naples, there was an en-

chanter, a cunning man in necromancy, who promised the duke that he would put him in possession of the castle of Leufe, at that time besieged by him. The duke was desirous of knowing by what means this could be effected, and the magician said, 'I shall, by enchantment, make the air so thick that they within the castle will think there is a great bridge over the sea, large enough for ten men abreast to come to them; and when they see this bridge they will readily yield themselves to your mercy, lest they should be taken perforce.' 'And may not my men,' said the duke, 'pass over this bridge in reality?' To this question the juggler artfully replied, 'I dare not, sir, assure you that; for if any one of the men that passeth over the bridge shall make the sign of the cross upon him, all shall go to naught, and they that be upon it shall fall into the sea.' The Earl of Savoy, being made acquainted with this conference, said to the duke, 'I know well it is the same enchanter who caused by his craft the sea to seem so high, that they within this castle were sore abashed, and feared all to have died.' The earl then commanded the enchanter to be brought before him, when he boasted that by the power of his art he had caused the castle to be delivered to Sir Charles de la Paye, who was then in possession of it. 'By my faith,' said the Earl of Savoy, 'ye shall never do more enchantments to deceive him, nor yet any other.' So saying he ordered him to be beheaded; and the sentence was instantly put into execution before the door of the earl's tent."

In England the king's juggler continued to have an establishment in the royal household till the time of Henry VIII., in whose reign the office and title seem to have been discontinued. Our learned monarch James I. imagined that the feats exhibited by these people could only be performed by the agency of the Devil, who, he says, "will learne them many juglarie trickes at cardes and dice, to deceive men's senses thereby, and such innumerable false practicques, which are proved by over many in this age." His majesty proceeds to inform us, in explanation of the mystery they employ, that "the art of sorcery consists in diverse forms of circles and conjurations rightly joined together, few or more in number, according to the number of the persons conjurers and the form of the apparition. All things being ready and prepared, the circles are made, triangular, quadrangular, round, double, or single."

This, Grose observes, may be a very accurate description of the mode of conjuration styled the circular method; but with all due respect to his majesty's learning, square and triangular circles are figures not to be found in Euclid, or in any of the common writers on geometry. But perhaps King James learned his mathematics from the same system as Dr. Sacheverell, who, in one of his speeches or sermons, made use of the following simile; "They concur like parallel lines meeting in one common centre." Reginald Scott tells us that these magic circles are commonly nine feet in breadth, but the eastern magicians must give seven. He was a liberal, however, for the age in which he lived (1584), for he adds, "howbeit, if these things be done for mirth and recreation, and not to the hurt of our neighbour, nor to the abusing or prophaning of God's name, in mine opinion they are neither impious nor altogether unlawful; though herein or hereby a natural thing be made to seem unnatural."

Ady, in his "Candle in the Dark," p. 29, speaking of common jugglers, that go up and down to play their tricks in fairs and markets, says, "I will speak of one man more excelling in that craft than others, that went about in King James his time, and long since, who called himself the *king's majesties most excellent* HOCUS POCUS, and so was he called, because that at the playing of every trick he used to say Hocus pocus,* tontus, talontus, vade celeriter jubeo,' a darke composure of words to blinde the eyes of beholders."

In the fourteenth century, the tragetours seem to have been in the zenith of their glory, from which period they gradually declined in the popular esteem. In an old morality, or interlude, written in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, a servant, describing the sports at his master's wedding, says:

> What juggling was there upon the boards!
> What thrustyng of knives thro' many a nose!

* Archbishop Tillotson tells us that those common juggling words *hocus pocus* are nothing else but a corruption of *hoc est corpus*, by way of ridiculous imitation of the priests of the church of Rome in their trick of transubstantiation. *Hiccius doctius*, also a common term among our modern sleight-of-hand men, is probably borrowed from the old Roman Catholics, the presence of whose priests in the assemblies of the people was usually announced by exclamations of *hic est doctus! hic est doctus!*

What bearing of formes! what holdinge of swords!
What puttyng of botkins through legge and hose!

These tricks approximate closely to those of the modern jugglers, who have knives so constructed, that when they are applied to the legs, the arms, and other parts of the human figure, they have the appearance of being thrust through them.* The bearing of the forms or seats we may suppose to have been some sort of balancing; and the holding of swords alludes probably to the sword dance.

In a short chapter, entitled "Prestigiæ, or Sleights," published a century and a half ago, we have a view of a juggler's exhibition. It consists of four divertisements, including the joculator's own performances; the other three are tumbling and jumping through a rope, the grotesque dances of the clown or mimic, and dancing upon the tight rope. In modern times the juggler has united songs and puppet-plays to his show.

At the close of Queen Elizabeth's reign the profession of the juggler, with that of the minstrel, had sunk so low in public estimation, that the performers were ranked not only with "ruffians, blasphemers, thieves, and vagabonds," but also with "heretics, Jews, Pagans, and sorcerers." In more modern times, by way of derision, the juggler was called a *hocus pocus*, a term applicable to a pickpocket or a common cheat.

These artists were greatly encouraged in the middle ages; they travelled in large companies, and carried with them such machinery as was necessary for the performance of their deceptions, by which apparatus, with the assistance of expert confederates, they might easily produce illusions of a very startling and inexplicable nature to spectators totally ignorant of natural philosophy, and prone to every species of superstitious credulity. Probably they had no exhibitions so astounding at first sight as the modern phantasmagoria, the automaton chess-player, the balloon, the sympathetic inks, and several of our chemical wonders, phenomena of which the principles are now familiar to many a schoolboy. Even our fire-eaters and combustible foreigners, who walk into an oven at a heat that will cook a beefsteak, are but

* A full description of these tricks with knives, illustrated by engravings, is given in Malcolm's Customs of London, vol. iii. p. 28.

renewing pyrotechnic wonders that were known and practised centuries ago. The little black-letter "Book of Secretes of Albertus Magnus," which discovers many "mervelys of the world," gives full instructions how to perform the following exploits: 1. "When thou wilt that thou seeme inflamed, or set on fyre from thy head unto thy feete, and not be hurt."—2. "A merveylous experience, which maketh menne to go into the fyre without hurte, or to beare fyre, or red hot yron in their hande without hurte." Dr. Fordyce, Sir Joseph Banks, and others, went into a heated room of nearly as high a temperature as M. Chabert's oven; the girls mentioned by M. Tillet supported a heat of sixty degrees higher; recent experiments fully confirm the capacity of human beings to endure a still greater exposure to heat, without any very serious inconvenience; and, in short, an extension of our philosophical knowledge will outjuggle jugglers of every description.*

Our sapient monarch James I. was not altogether without grounds for ascribing the marvellous exploits of the tragetours to witchcraft and demonology, since instances occurred wherein those performers, in order perhaps to excite the greater attention, assumed to themselves the possession of supernatural powers, and even suffered death, under their own confession, as wizards and sorcerers. Upon this subject Lord Verulam's reflections† form a fine contrast to the narrow and bigoted ideas of the royal author of the Demonology. "Men may not too rashly believe the confession of witches, nor yet the evidence against them, for the witches themselves are imaginative, and believe ofttimes they do that which they do not; and people are credulous on that point, and ready to impute accidents and natural operations to witchcraft. It is worthy the observing, that both in ancient and late times the great wonders which they tell are still reported to be wrought, not by incantations or ceremonies, but by anointing themselves all over. This may justly move a man to think that these fables are the effects of imagination; for it is certain that ointments do

* See Hone's Every-day Book, vol. ii. p. 780. An account of the ignivorous achievements of Powel, who exhibited in England about fifty years ago, may be found in Strutt's Sports and Pastimes, 4to., p. 213; from which book and Brand's Popular Antiquities these brief notices have been chiefly gleaned.

† In the tenth century of his Natural History.

all (if they be laid on any thing thick), by stopping of the pores, shut in the vapours, and send them to the head extremely."

The age of superstition and credulity is rapidly passing away; a smile of contempt is the principal effect produced by the cozening priests who at Naples go through the annual mummery of liquefying St. Januarius's blood; a new Faustus might spring up in Germany, or a second Galileo at Rome, without any fear of their being punished as magicians or heretics; and that juggler must be a conjurer indeed, who, even at the ignorant village of Tring, where the last of the witches was put to death, could now persuade his spectators that his legerdemain tricks were of a supernatural character, or performed by the aid of demons.

CHAPTER XX.

Sedentary Amusements.—Music, Minstrels.

"The man that hath not music in his soul,
Nor is not mov'd with concord of sweet sounds.
Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils.
The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
And his affections dark as Erebus:
Let no such man be trusted."

Shakspeare.

Why should we record the various and profound theories which have been formed upon the origin and first invention of music? Surely it is more philosophical and true, more in accordance with the dictates of religion and the grateful promptings of reason, to acknowledge it at once as the immediate, the earliest, and the most precious boon of Heaven. Nature herself has implanted in the heart of man a love of song, and of melodious combinations, by which he may give vent to, and create an echo for, his own joy in his happier moments, dissipate his sorrows when under affliction, and cheer his labour at all times. By this innocent artifice the peasant and the mechanic lighten their daily drudgery; and the boatman, as he times the motion of his

oars to some familiar tune, seems to convert his toil into a pleasure. It has even, by a sad perversion of its peaceful tendencies, emboldened man to confront all the perils of war; and Quintilian expressly affirms that the high reputation of the Roman soldiery was partly attributable to the effect produced by the martial sound of the horns and trumpets. Music is the purest, the sweetest, the most enduring of all our gratifications. If the best things abused become the worst, there are few of our blessings which may not be said to contain within them the seed of a curse; but from this liability to perversion, from this principle of self-corruption, the fascinating art of which we are now treating, is in a great measure exempt. "When music, heavenly maid, was young," we are indeed told that she possessed an infuriating and even a maddening power; but we are not to yield implicit credence to the reveries of poets and fabulists. No; music is naturally an allayer, not an exciter, of the angry passions; she seeks to ally herself with religion and virtue, rather than with their opposites; she is our guide, our solace, our preserver from evil temptations; and he who feels not the complacent influence of this guardian spirit should beware lest he justify the sinister averment of our motto.

To the divine gift of speech, the source of so many inappreciable pleasures and advantages, music adds a universal language which all may understand, by which all may be equally charmed, and which is infinitely more lively, more animated, and better adapted than any other to excite the emotions of the heart. There is not, it must be confessed, a more noble instrument than the human voice, which, possessing exclusively the power of uttering articulate and intelligible sounds, can make thought melodious, can infuse the whole soul into its mellifluous intonations, and at once ravish the ear, subdue the heart, and exercise the intellect. But when the soul is penetrated and absorbed by some exciting object, ordinary speech is inadequate to the full expression of its transports. Yielding to the vehemence of its impressions, it effuses itself in cries, exclamatory apostrophes, and every variety of impassioned cadence, and not content with this vocal outpouring of its feelings, it seeks the aid of music, which calms its agitation by imparting to sounds a variety, extent, continuity, and sooth-

ing sweetness, which the voice can never attain. Such being the effects of this divine science, for such almost may music be termed, we can little wonder that in the earlier ages it was almost exclusively appropriated to the usages of religion, whose chief province it is to transport and elevate the soul by sentiments of joy, love, and gratitude to heaven. In these devout ecstasies, music, supplying what the human organs are incompetent to convey, enables the heart to give vent to the deep emotions of admiration and rapture; makes it feel its own happiness; enlarges its holy joy, by the expansiveness of correspondent sounds, and seems to furnish it with melodious wings that it may waft itself upwards to the great object of its adoration. Such were the purposes to which it was applied by David, whose psalms, chanted to the accompaniment of voices and instruments, were intended to make known the miracles of the Deity, and to give a more fervent, grand, and sonorous expression to the praises, the gratitude, and the homage of man.

In the infancy of the art, music, when not exclusively appropriated to religion, seems to have been restricted, even among the Pagan nations, to the highest and most important objects, to which it addressed itself by a character of gravity and simplicity. Ancient authors tell us that all the laws and exhortations to virtue, the lives and achievements of gods, heroes, and illustrious men, were written in verse, and sung publicly by a choir to the sound of instruments; a practice which we know to have also prevailed in the earliest times among the Israelites. More efficacious means for impressing the mind of the hearer with the love of religion and virtue could hardly be devised, than when the sublime sentiments of both, clothed in all the dulcet accessories that could captivate the sense and touch the soul, as well as hallowed by the sanctifying influences of the temple wherein they were promulgated, were poured at once upon the ear and upon the heart of the auditor. Such were the important effects formerly attributed to this art, both upon morals and politics, that Plato and Aristotle, who disagree in almost every other maxim, accord in their approbation of music as a powerful instrument in softening the roughness and ferocity of uncivilized man, and of forming the public character of nations. To this high praise, however, it can only have been entitled in its primitive state, when, by

drawing the attention of a rude people to the poetry of which it formed the accompaniment, and by assisting to fix in their memories the religious doctrines, the legislative edicts, or the moral maxims thus publicly chanted, it assumed a reasoning and didactic rather than a sensual character, and became a powerful assistant to the divine and the legislator, who in those ages were generally musicians also. In the infancy of the world, when few or none could read, it was necessary to set religion and virtue to music, in order that they might the more readily be learned by heart; just as, in our modern infant-schools, we instil the rudiments of education by adopting them to some simple and familiar tune. However inartificial it might be in its construction, we have every reason to conclude that there was infinite grandeur and majesty in the music of the ancients, and more especially of the Hebrews, whose vocal and instrumental choir, composed of hereditary performers, had not only the benefit of incessant tuition, but could scarcely fail to catch some portion of the sublimity and inspiration contained in the canticles on which this art was exercised.

This was the golden age of music, this was its high and palmy state, this the period at which it assumed its noblest and most exalted character. Like man himself, it derived all its dignity from its subordination to a loftier and more spiritual power; and, like the ambitious angels, it fell when it became discontented with the heaven that it enjoyed. From the moment when, divorcing itself from poetry, it sought to be a principal instead of an accessory, to attach more importance to a sound than to a thought, to supersede sentiment by skill, to become, in short, man's playfellow rather than his assistant teacher, a sensual instead of an intellectual gratification, its corruption or at least its application to less ennobling purposes had already commenced. We have said that the science was hardly capable of any very gross perversion; but it was now rather associated with the earth than with heaven, more employed to reconcile man to this world than to prepare him for another; it was rendered subservient to the passions; presented a new and a fascinating pleasure, which, however blameless when indulged with moderation, was not altogether unsusceptible of abuse, since it might tend, by its great power over the mind, to subject it to the senses, to fix the soul, as it were,

in the ears, disinclining them to listen to the voice of wisdom and truth, in their overweening fondness for a combination of sweet but idealess and unimproving sounds. As the art of music, strictly so called, was more assiduously cultivated as it became more and more perplexed with complicated intricacies, only understood by a few, and less and less an exponent of the simple feelings and sentiments that are intelligible to all, it may be said to have lost in general utility and value what it gained in science, and to have been gradually dissolving that union between sound and sense which imparted to it its chief interest and influence.

Plutarch complains that in his time the masculine, noble, and divine music of the ancients, characterized by such a majestic gravity, was superseded by a theatrical style, calculated to inspire only effeminacy and voluptuousness; a subject on which he thus expresses himself, in the ninth book of his Symposiacs: "The degenerate music which now prevails, degrading all the arts connected with it, and more especially that of dancing, has divorced itself from the ancient style, which was altogether divine, and, becoming associated with trivial and vulgar poetry, has obtained possession of our theatres, where it excites such an extravagant admiration that it is enabled to exercise a complete tyranny over the stage. But at the same time it has lost the approbation of all those who, by their wisdom and their virtue, ought to be considered the best judges of what is decorous and proper." The reader can scarcely fail to apply these remarks to modern times and our own country. Perhaps the most signal instance of the disassociation lamented by Plutarch is afforded by our English Italian operas, where a great portion of the auditors, being ignorant of the language, cannot appreciate the consonance, if any such exist, between the sentiments and the music; when, consequently, the words falling like inarticulate sounds upon the ear, cannot penetrate any further; and the pleasure derived from the scientific combinations of the composer, the mellifluous cadences of the singer, or the manual dexterity of the musicians, calls into exercise neither the feelings of the heart, nor the faculties of the head, and cannot lay claim, therefore, to any higher distinction than that of a strictly sensual, though doubtless a refined and elegant, gratification.

To a certain extent, music has only followed the corruption of its associate, poetry, the sister muses having shared the same destiny. Confined at first to a strict and perfect imitation of nature, they had no other object than to instruct by delighting, and to excite emotions of piety to heaven and benevolence towards man. For this purpose they employed the most appropriate expressions, rhythm, and melody. Music, always simple and marked by a grave and noble decency, respected the limits which had been prescribed by the great masters, and more especially by the philosophers and legislators, who were generally at the same time poets and musicians. But the theatrical spectacles, together with the worship of Bacchus and other disorderly deities, ultimately depraved these wise regulations. By giving birth to the dithyrambic poetry, which was equally licentious in the expression, the rhythm, and the sentiments, they called into existence a music of the same lawless character, and thus inflicted an irreparable injury on both.*

Converted into an elaborate science, or applied to trifling and unworthy objects, modern music seldom reaches further than the external senses, though it has been doubted whether the pleasure it imparts can at any time be strictly termed mechanical. "It may indeed happen, from the number of the performers, and the complication of the harmony, that meaning and sentiment may be lost in the multiplicity of sounds; but this, though it may be harmony, loses the name of music, which, when it is not in some degree characterized by an expression of the passions, deserves no better name than that of a musical jargon. It must be attributed to our neglect of this alone, while our whole attention is bestowed on harmony and execution, that the best performances of our artists and composers are heard with listless indifference and oscitation, nor ever can conciliate any admirers, but such as are induced, by pedantry and affectation, to pretend what they do not feel. Still may the curse of indifference and inattention pursue and harrow up the souls of every composer or performer who pretends to regale our ears with this musical legerdemain, till the grin of scorn or the hiss of infamy teach them to correct this depravity of taste, and entertain us with the voice of nature!"†

* Dictionnaire des Auteurs Classiques, art *Musique.*
† Encyclop. Britan., art. *Music.*

We shall not extend these preliminary observations upon the general nature of music, but proceed to give a brief sketch of its history in this country. If we may judge by the respect and reverence shown to their bards, we may conclude that the ancient Britons were passionate admirers of vocal and instrumental music. "Sometimes," says Bertholinus, "when two armies were standing in order of battle, with their swords drawn and their lances extended, upon the point of engaging in a most furious conflict, the poets have stepped in between them, and by their soft and fascinating songs calmed the fury of the warriors, and prevented the bloodshed." The scalds were the poets and musicians of all the northern nations; and upon the establishment of the Saxons in Britain, the courts of the kings and the residences of the nobility afforded a constant asylum to these early minstrels. "In the Anglo-Saxon language they were distinguished by two appellations, the one equivalent to the modern term of gleemen or merrimakers, and the other harpers, from the instrument they usually played upon. The gleemen added mimicry and other means of promoting mirth to their profession, as well as dancing and tumbling, with sleights of hand, and variety of deceptions, to amuse the spectators."*

As early as the seventh century it was customary at convivial meetings to hand a harp from one person to another, and every one who partook of the festivity played upon it in his turn, singing a song to the music for merriment's sake.† It is probable, however, that cultivated music was but little known until after the conversion of the Saxons to Christianity, when professional missionaries were sent from Rome to instruct the converts in the art of singing, and particularly to teach the choirs the manner of performing the festival service throughout the year, according to the practice of Rome. Under the superintendence of these precentors, schools were established in various places for the instruction of choristers, which accounts for that similarity and almost identity of melody observable in the sacred music of all the countries of Europe, up to the time of the Reformation. These masters did not always encounter very docile pupils. John Diaconus, in his life of

* Strutt's Sports and Pastimes, p. 156.

† Bede's Eccles. Hist., lib. iv. cap. 24, as quoted by Strutt

St. Gregory, tells us that the ancient Germans and French, in attempting to sing the Gregorian chant, "were wholly unable to express its sweetness, injuring it by barbarous changes, suggested either by their natural ferocity or inconstancy of disposition. Their figures were gigantic, and when they sang, it was rather thunder than musical tones. Their rude throats, instead of the inflections of pleasing melody, formed such rough sounds as resembled the noise of a cart jolting down a pair of stairs."* It is to be hoped that the seminary for ecclesiastical music which was subsequently established at Canterbury, and furnished instructers to the rest of the island, found more apt and pliant scholars. At all events they widely diffused the Roman music and singing, which were as much in favour with the English during the middle ages, when there were neither operas nor artificial voices to captivate our ancestors, as they are at the present day.

Alfred, whose name is always presented to us when recurring to the prevalent accomplishments of the age in which he lived, added to his other qualities that of being an excellent musician. His being enabled to impose upon the Danes, when he entered their camp as a disguised harper, is no mean proof of his ability; while his desire to encourage the art he practised is proved by his having founded a professorship at Oxford for its cultivation.

The celebrated minstrel Taillefer, who came into England with William the Norman, was a warrior as well as a musician. He was present at the battle of Hastings, and appeared at the head of the conqueror's army, singing the songs of Charlemagne and Roland; but, previously to the commencement of the action, he advanced on horseback towards the army of the English, and, casting his spear three times into the air, caught it as often by the iron head; he then drew his sword, which he also tossed into the air as often as he had done his spear, and caught it with such dexterity, that those who saw him attributed his manœuvres to the power of enchantment. After he had performed these feats, he galloped among the English soldiers, thereby giving the Normans the signal of battle; and in the action, it appears, he lost his life."†

* Burgh's Anecdotes of Music, vol. i. p. 155.
† Strutt's Sports and Pastimes, p. 159.

Soon after the conquest, these musicians were generally called minstrels, a term well known in Normandy some time before, where their art, consisting of several branches, was divided among different professors, distinguished by various denominations. It was at the period of the first crusade, in the eleventh century, when Europe was beginning to emerge from the darkness and barbarism by which it had so long been overwhelmed, that the poets and songsters known by the name of Troubadours* first appeared in Provence, instituting a new profession, which obtained the patronage of the Count of Poictou, and many other princes and barons, who had themselves cultivated poetry and music: war, love, and gallantry being their principal themes, they were naturally the delight of the brave and the favourites of the fair, because they sang the achievements of the one and the beauties of the other; while their compositions, being rapidly improved under the joint influence of emulation and emolument, they introduced and established at different courts the Provençal language, and became the founders of French song. It has been advanced that the troubadours not only effected a revolution in literature, but in the human mind, and that, as almost every species of Italian poetry is derived from them, so *air*, the most captivating part of secular vocal melody, seems to have had the same origin: at least that the most ancient strains that have been spared by time are such as were set to the songs of the troubadours.† They multiplied rapidly, and this swarm of poet-musicians, formerly comprehended in France under the general title of *jongleurs*, travelled from province to province, singing their verses at the courts of princes, and being rewarded with clothes, horses, arms, and money.

Jongleurs or musicians were often employed to sing the compositions of the troubadours, who themselves happened to be deficient in voice, or ignorant of music. The term *troubadour*, therefore, implies poetry as well as music. The jongleurs, menestriers, strollers, or minstrels, were frequently musicians without any pretensions to poetry. Many of the works of these old French poets are yet preserved. Fauchet has given a list of no less than 127 mostly song-writers, who flourished before the year 1300

* Sometimes called *Trouveurs*, or Inventors.

† Burney, ii. 233

During the reigns of our Norman kings, the minstrels were scarcely less numerous in England than in France. Many of our old monkish historians complain of the shoals of them which a coronation or royal festival allured to the court. The earls also, and great barons, who in their castles emulated the pomp and state of royalty, did not consider their household establishment complete without poets and minstrels, itinerant bands of whom were gladly entertained in the rich monasteries.

During the middle ages such large sums were sometimes lavished for the maintenance of minstrels, that the public treasuries were often drained. Matilda, queen to Henry I., after thus wasting the greater part of her revenue, is said to have oppressed her tenants in order to procure more. Viewing with a jealous eye every act of munificence that did not benefit themselves and their monasteries, the monks failed not to inveigh loudly against this extravagance, and to stigmatize the minstrels, in no very measured terms, as janglers, mimics, buffoons, monsters of men, and contemptible scoffers; while they censured the nobility for encouraging such sordid flatterers, and the populace for frequenting performances which diverted them from more serious pursuits, and only served to corrupt their morals. For these reproaches there seems to have been sufficient ground in the profligacy and insolence of the parties thus inculpated, which contributed more to their final downfall than all the interested declamation of their opponents. If encouragement produces excellence, these performers ought not to have been deficient in skill. Froissart, recording an entertainment given by the princely Gaston, Earl of Foix, says that he bestsowed on the heralds and minstrels the sum of five hundred francs; and to the Duke of Tourayn's minstrels gowns of cloth of gold furred with ermine, valued at two hundred francs each. In our own country the professors of minstrelsy had the opportunity of amassing much wealth. From Domesday-book it appears that Berdic, the king's joculator, had lands in Gloucestershire; Royer, Henry I.'s minstrel, founded the hospital and priory of St. Bartholomew, in West Smithfield; and brethren of the same order contributed towards building the church of St Mary, at Beverly, in Yorkshire, as an inscription on one of the pillars still attests. It must be confessed, however.

that their general habits did not dispose them to save money, and still less to appropriate it to pious uses.

In 1315, during the reign of Edward II., such extensive privileges were claimed by the minstrels, and so many dissolute persons assumed that character, that it became necessary to restrain them by express laws, which, however, made an exception in favour of professional performers and minstrels of honour; meaning, probably, those retained by the king and the nobility. The same abuses and extortions being complained of in little more than a century afterward, Edward IV. granted to Walter Haliday, marshal, and to seven others of his own minstrels, a charter, by which he restored the guild, or fraternity of the minstrels, empowering them to admit others, and to govern and punish, when necessary, all such as exercised the profession throughout the kingdom.

This institution neither corrected the abuses, nor retrieved the reputation of the fraternity, which now suffered a gradual decline. In the reign of Queen Elizabeth their credit was sunk so low in public estimation, that in an act against vagrants, they were included among the rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars, and subjected to the like punishments —an edict which seems to have given the deathblow to this once highly-honoured profession. Public and private bands of musicians, however, were for a considerable time after this period still called minstrels, without any disparagement; but the term seems to have been limited to instrumental performers, and such as were placed upon a regular establishment. The musicians of the city of London, for instance, were called indifferently waits and minstrels.*

In Ireland the bards and minstrels had at one time "increased so much, and grown so insolent and formidable, that it was in a solemn convention of the states resolved to banish them into—SCOTLAND! This sentence struck such a terror into our unruly musicians, as quickly brought them to their senses: they implored pardon; and, upon a promise of amendment, were suffered to disperse themselves up and down the country."† The poet Spenser describes them, in his time, as a most abandoned, corrupt, and desperate set of men; the abettors of robbery, violence, and every other

* Stow's Survey, p. 84; Strutt's Sports and Pastimes, p. 169.
† Historical Essay on National Song, p. 37.

crime. From these reproaches we must absolve the more modern bard, blind Carolan, the last Irish minstrel, whose convivial planxties, composed, it is said, under the immediate inspiration of whiskey, will long preserve his popularity among the lovers of the bottle; while his plaintive compositions will ever find admirers in those who have a soul for simple and touching melody. Carolan is no more; and of the minstrels who once formed the delight of the prince and the peasant, of the kingly hall and the lady's bower, we have now, alas! no better representatives than the blind fiddlers wandering about the country, and the ballad-singers, who occasionally accompany their ditties with instrumental music.

After the invention of printing—an art which has tended to disseminate knowledge with wonderful rapidity among mankind—music, and particularly counterpoint, became an object of high importance. A more active intercourse between the different countries of Europe tended much also to the improvement of this science. All the arts, indeed, seem to have been the companions, if not the produce, of successful commerce: they appeared first in Italy, then in the Hanseatic towns, next in the Netherlands; and during the sixteenth century, when commerce became general, in every part of Europe. At this latter period music was an indispensable part of polite education. Professional performers, both vocal and instrumental, were retained at the court, and in the mansions of the nobility; and the period had arrived when the principal materials for scientific composition were prepared, when a regular and extensive scale for melody, a code of general laws for harmony, and a commodious notation and time-table, supplied the whole mechanism of the art. Practical musicians among the laity now began to acquire great reputation. An author who lived in the time of James I. says, "We have here,"—that is, in London—"the best musicians in the kingdom, and equal to any in Europe for their skill in composing and setting of tunes, or singing, and playing upon any kind of instruments." Even our monarchs were proud thus to distinguish themselves. Henry VIII. not only sang well, but played upon several sorts of instruments, and composed songs and the tunes for them; an example which was

followed by several of the nobility.* There is a collection preserved in manuscript, called *Queen Elizabeth's Virginal Book*, containing pieces which the best modern master could hardly play to the end in less than a month's practice. *Tallis*, singularly profound in musical composition, and *Bird*, his admirable scholar, were two of the authors of this famous collection. During the reign of Elizabeth, the British musicians were not inferior to any on the continent; an observation scarcely applicable to any other period of our history.

But little of our secular music to the beginning of the sixteenth century has been preserved. Of choral compositions during this century, several are still extant. Henry VIII. was the author of two whole masses, besides an anthem, preserved in Boyce's collection, and a *motet*, of which the late Dr. Hayes, of Oxford, possessed a genuine copy. John Marbeck, organist of Windsor, first set to music in 1550, the *whole* English cathedral service; which, however, was mere *canto fermo*, without counterpoint. It was in the reign of Edward VI. that metrical psalmody, as it is still employed in our parochial churches, became general in England, by the version of Sternhold and Hopkins. Of the clear and masterly style of Dr. Tye, one of the principal composers of this period, a specimen is exhibited in Dr. Burney's second volume; and in the *Collection of Cathedral Music, by English Masters*, will be found an admirable anthem of the same composer. All church music, however, was about this period in danger of extirpation from the zeal of the Reformers against organs and curious singing, the puritans justly arguing that the pedantry of operose compositions and intricate measures not only rendered the words, but the music, difficult of comprehension. This objection being held reasonable, the council of Trent, in 1562, prohibited, among other things, "L'uso delle musiche nelle chiese con mistura di canto, o suono lascivo, tutte le azioni secolari, colloquie profane, strepiti, gridori." A puritan pamphlet, published in 1586, prays, "that all cathedral churches may be put down where the service of God is grievously abused by piping with organs, singing, ringing, and howling of psalms from one side of the choir

* Hall's Chronicle

to another; with the squeaking of chanting choristers, disguised, as are all the rest, in white surplices; some in corner-caps and silly copes, imitating the fashion and manner of antichrist, the pope, that man of sin, and child of perdition, with his other rabble of miscreants and shavelings."*

CHAPTER XXI.

Sedentary Amusements.—Music, concluded.

"When lo! a harlot form soft sliding by,
With mincing step—small voice, and languid eye,
Foreign her air—her robe's discordant pride,
By singing peers upheld on either side;
She tripp'd and laugh'd—too pretty much to stand—
Cast on the prostrate nine a scornful look—
Then thus in quaint recitativo spoke:
'O Cara! Cara! silence all that train;
Joy to great Chaos! let division reign:
But soon, ah! soon rebellion will commence,
If music meanly borrows aid from sense.'"
The Dunciad.

About the end of the reign of James I. a music lecture, or professorship, was founded in the University of Oxford; but that monarch afforded little other encouragement to the art. No royal concerts are on record, and secular music within the precincts of the court, seems to have been confined to the masks performed for the amusement of his majesty, in which songs and symphonies were occasionally introduced. Anthems, masks, madrigals, songs, and catches comprised at this time the whole of our music for the church, the stage, and the chamber; and the instrumental productions were chiefly composed for lutes and viols. These being now entirely laid aside, we could scarcely do them justice, even had they been replete with genius and learning, which is by no means the case, their general character being that of an artless insipidity. The musical writers and composers of the seventeenth century who acquired

* Neal's History of the Puritans, p. 290 and 480.

the greatest fame were, Orlando Gibbons, Pelham Humphrey, and Henry Purcell, who far excelled all their competitors. "The *purists*," says Burney, when speaking of Gibbons, "on account of the confusion arising from all the parts singing different words at the same time, pronounce the style in which his full anthems are composed to be vicious; yet the admirers of fugue, ingenious contrivance, and rich, simple, and pleasing harmony, must regard them as exquisite productions, *alla Palestrina*, a style in which Tallis and Bird acquired so much renown." Of Purcell we shall presently speak more fully.

Instrumental music was little cultivated in this reign. The words *concerto* and *sonata* do not appear to have been then known even in Italy, nor did they come into common use till late in the seventeenth century. Madrigals, which were then almost the only secular compositions in parts, were supplanted by a passion for fantasias of three, four, five, and six parts, wholly composed for viols and other instruments, without the assistance of singers. Thus vocal music not only lost her independency, but was almost totally driven out of society; as the ancient Britons, calling in the Saxons to support them, were themselves subdued by their own auxiliaries. Notwithstanding their title of fantasias, the style of these pieces would now appear very dry and fanciless, not to say contemptible. All the instrumental music, indeed, of this period, with the single exception of the fugues of Frescobaldi, and the compositions for the organ, is dry, difficult, unaccented, and insipid.*

Of the masks which were in fashion at the court of Charles I., the excellence consisted rather in the quaintness of the device, the magnificence of the scenery, and the splendid constructions of the theatre, than in the music. Ben Jonson wasted his talent upon these trifling interludes, while Inigo Jones was condemned to exercise his luxuriant architectural taste upon no better materials than pasteboard and canvass. To this fashion, however, we owe those beautiful compositions, the Faithful Shepherdess of Fletcher, and the Comus of Milton, of which latter Henry Lawes, the friend of the author, composed the music.

Prior to the year 1600 we had few other compositions

* Burgh's Anecdotes of Music, ii. 116.

than masses and madrigals, the two principal divisions of sacred and secular music; but from that time dramatic music became the chief object of attention, preparing a revolution as to melody and expression even in sacred productions. Melodies now began to be preferred to pieces of many parts; in which canons, fugues, and full harmony had chiefly employed the master's study, and the hearer's attention. Our hasty retrospect has hitherto furnished nothing so important to the progress of the art as the invention of recitative, or dramatic melody, which belongs to this era. No musical dramas similar to those afterward known by the names of Opera and Oratorio had existed in Italy before the beginning of the seventeenth century; and although the *stilo recitativo*, first mentioned by Ben Jonson in 1617, was occasionally introduced upon the English stage in masks, plays, and cantatas, no regular drama wholly set to music was attempted, until in 1658 Sir William Davenant produced the first opera ever performed in this country. Other entertainments of the same sort were exhibited with a profuse decoration of scenery and dresses, rendered still more attractive by the best singers and dancers that could be procured. Of these musical dramas the language was always English, until the latter end of the seventeenth century, when Italian singing began to be encouraged, and vocal as well as instrumental performers from that country were introduced upon our boards. The first English musical drama performed wholly after the Italian manner in recitative for the dialogue and narrative, and measured melody for the airs, was Arsinoe, Queen of Cyprus, brought out at Drury-lane in 1705. Such is the charm of novelty, that although this miserable performance deserved neither the name of a drama by its poetry, nor of an opera by its music, it proved successful. The first opera performed wholly in Italian, and by Italian singers, was Almaide, produced in 1710.

In all things, and particularly in music, the taste of Charles II. was that of a Frenchman. He had French operas; a band of twenty-four violins in imitation of that at Paris; and French masters to instruct some of them in London, while others were sent to Paris for tuition; where, however, it must be confessed, that musical science, as well as every other liberal art, was then better understood than

in England. Banister, the leader of his band, was the first musician who established lucrative concerts in London. Perceiving the eagerness of the public for these performances, the principal masters fitted up a concert-room in York-buildings, where the best compositions and performers, under the title of *The Music Meeting*, continued for upwards of half a century to receive the patronage of the most distinguished audiences. It was in this reign that Henry Purcell, rising rapidly to distinction, became the darling and the delight of the nation, so far surpassing, both in vocal and instrumental music, whatever our country had previously produced or imported, that all his competitors seem to have been instantly consigned to contempt and oblivion. Nor was any other vocal music listened to with pleasure until nearly thirty years after his death, when he began to suffer the eclipse to which he had condemned his predecessors, and his compositions gave way to the favourite opera songs of Handel.

The fame of this last-mentioned musician having preceded his arrival in 1710, Aaron Hill, then in the direction of the Haymarket theatre, instantly applied to him to compose the opera of Rinaldo, the admirable music of which he entirely produced within a fortnight. Other works rapidly followed, but the public taste for musical dramas in Italian was now upon the wane, and the opera entertainments being found unprofitable were entirely suspended from 1717 to 1720 when a fund of 50,000*l.* for supporting and carrying them on was subscribed by the first personages in the kingdom, formed into a society named "The Royal Academy of Music," by whom Handel was commissioned to engage operatic performers. At the close of the first season it appeared that the united efforts of the greatest composers and completest band of singers ever collected in this country, although patronised by the king and all the principal nobility, had not indemnified the directors for the expenses of the undertaking. Thus we find, that from the first establishment of the regular Italian opera in this country it has proved a ruinous speculation to the managers.

In the year 1723 the celebrated Francesca Cuzzoni appeared as a first-rate singer, and two years afterward her distinguished rival Faustina Bordoni, both of whom introduced changes in the style of operatic singing by running

divisions with neatness and velocity, as well as by sustaining, diminishing, or increasing the tones in a manner previously unpractised. So signally did these two performers engage the attention of the public, that parties were formed by their respective abettors almost as violent and inveterate as any that had been produced by theological or political differences; yet so distinct were their styles of singing, so different their talents, that the praise of one was no disparagement of the other.

Oratorios were common in Italy during the seventeenth century, but in England they were never publicly attempted till the year 1732, when Handel, stimulated by the rivalship of other adventurers, exhibited his oratorios of Esther, and of Acis and Galatea; the last of which he had composed twelve years before for the Duke of Chandos's chapel at Canons. But this great composer had not only to struggle against professional opposition. The nobility and gentry, offended at the advanced price for admission to the oratorios on opera nights, opened a subscription for the performance of Italian operas at Lincoln's-Inn-fields, inviting the celebrated Porpora to compose and conduct it, and engaging among other distinguished performers the matchless Farinelli. The first effect which the surprising talents of this most celebrated singer produced upon an English audience were ecstasy, rapture, enchantment. The first note he sang was taken with such delicacy, swelled by minute degrees to such an amazing volume, and afterward diminished in the same manner to a mere point, that it was applauded for full five minutes. After this he set off with such brilliancy and rapidity of execution, that it was difficult for the violins of those days to keep pace with him. In short, in comparison with all other singers he was as superior as the famous horse Childers to all other racers. But it was not in speed alone that he excelled, for he united every perfection of every celebrated singer, and his voice was equally unrivalled in strength, sweetness, and compass, in the expression of tenderness, grace, and rapidity.* It is well known that this extraordinary singer and amiable man resided for nearly twenty years at the court of Madrid, where his favour increased to such a degree that he was

* Burgh's Anecdotes, vol. iii. p. 89.

regarded as prime minister, and yet made no enemies, and was never reproached with having abused his good fortune.

Two theatres for the performance of operas were now open, and both supported by composers and performers of great eminence; but the opposition, after having been maintained for some time with great spirit, ended in the ruin of all the parties engaged in it. It is in vain, however, to attribute this result to faction or enmity to Handel. The fact is, that the rage for these entertainments had greatly abated in our country, in spite of good composition and exquisite performance. An Englishman tires of dainties sooner than of common food, to which he returns with pleasure after excess. The public curiosity being satisfied, the whole nation regaled with eagerness and content upon the *Beggar's Opera*, and ballad farces on the same plan. Handel, having lost great part of his fortune by the opera, was under the necessity of appealing to the public gratitude in a benefit, which, for the honour of the nation, was so fully attended that he cleared 800*l*. His coadjutor, Heidegger, opened an opera subscription for the ensuing season, but it was found necessary to abandon the undertaking, and the King's theatre, in the Haymarket, was shut up for some years. It was about this time that the statue of Handel was erected in Vauxhall, at the expense of Mr. Tyers, the proprietor of those gardens.

In 1745, in consequence of the rebellion in Scotland and the popular prejudice against the performers, who were mostly Roman Catholics, the opera-house was shut. Next year it opened with an opera by Gluck, then a very young composer, and new dances by Auretti and the charming Violetta,* which, we are told, were more admired than the music. In the autumn of this year, serious operas being discontinued, a new company of *comic* singers was imported from Italy for the first time. Four years afterward the arrival of Giardini formed a memorable epoch in the instrumental music of this kingdom, his powers on the violin never having been equalled. When at his first public performance he played a solo of Martini's composition, the applause was so long and loud that Dr. Burney, who was present, says he had never heard such hearty and un-

* Afterward Mrs. Garrick, and only recently deceased.

equivocal marks of approbation. In this year Signor Croza, the manager of the opera, ran away, leaving the performers and innumerable tradespeople his creditors; an event which for some time put a period to operas of every description.

The arrival of Giovanni Manzoli, in 1764, marked a splendid era in the annals of dramatic music, by conferring on serious opera a degree of favour which it had seldom attained since its first establishment in this country. "Manzoli's voice," says Dr. Burney, "was the most powerful and voluminous soprano that had ever been heard on our stage since the time of Farinelli; and his manner of singing was grand and full of dignity. The applause he received was a universal thunder of acclamation." Tenducci, returning at this time from the continent, and much improved, filled the station of second to Manzoli. Dr. Arne was employed to compose for these distinguished vocalists, but he was out of his element in an Italian opera, and his attempt was considered a decided failure.

Gaetano Guadagni created a great sensation in the musical world in the year 1769. His figure was uncommonly elegant and noble; his countenance replete with beauty, intelligence, and dignity; and his attitudes and gestures so graceful that they would have been excellent studies for a painter or a statuary. The music he sang was the most simple imaginable; a few notes with frequent pauses and opportunities of being liberated from the composer and the band were all he required. In these seemingly extemporaneous effusions he proved the inherent power of melody, totally divorced from harmony, and unassisted even by unisonous accompaniment. The pleasure he communicated proceeded chiefly from his artful manner of diminishing the tones of his voice, like the dying notes of the Æolian harp. Other singers captivated by a swell, but Guadagni, after beginning a note or passage with all the force he could safely exert, fined it off to a thread, and gave it the entire effect of extreme distance.

It was about the period of which we are now writing that dancing seemed to gain the ascendant over music, by the superior talent of Mademoiselle Heinel, whose grace and execution were so perfect as to eclipse all other excellence. "From this time to the present hour dancing

appears to have encroached upon music, and instead of being a dependant or auxiliary has constantly been aiming at the sovereignty of the opera-house. In the early musical dramas poetry seems to have been the most important personage. About the middle of the seventeenth century machinery and decoration took the lead, and diminished the consequence both of music and poetry. As the arts of singing and dramatic composition improved, music gained the ascendency over both decoration and poetry, until the judgment of Apostolo Zeno and the genius of Metastasio exalted the lyric muse far above her former level. Dancing now threatened to annihilate the former three. After the departure of Mademoiselle Heinel, Vestris le Jeune and Mademoiselle Baccelli were the favourite dancers, till the arrival of the elder Vestris, when pleasure was sublimed into ecstasy.

"In the year 1781, the celebrated Pacchierotti had been heard so often that his singing was no impediment to conversation; but while the elder Vestris was on the stage, if, during a *pas seul*, any of his admirers forgot themselves so far as to applaud him with their hands, there was an instant check upon his rapture by a choral *hush!* Those lovers of music who talked the loudest while Pacchierotti was singing a pathetic air, or making an exquisite close, were now thrown into agonies of displeasure, lest the graceful movements *du dieu de la danse* should be disturbed by audible approbation. Since that time the most minute and respectful attention has been given to the manly grace of Le Picq and the light fantastic toe of the younger Vestris; to the Rossis, the Theodores, the Coulons, the Hilligsburgs, and a long train of still more modern professors; while the poor singers have usually been disturbed, not by the violence of applause, but by the clamour of inattention."*

Some of the most distinguished patrons of music, having remarked that the number of eminent professors, both vocal and instrumental, with which London abounded exceeded that of any other city of Europe, lamented that there was no public periodical occasion for consolidating them into one band, on such a grand and magnificent scale as no

* Burgh's Anecdotes, vol. iii. p. 193.

other part of the world could equal. It occurred to these gentlemen, who were all enthusiastic admirers of Handel, that the next year (1784) would be a proper time for some such institution, since it formed a complete century since his birth, and an exact quarter of a century since his decease. Such was the origin of the commemoration of Handel, which was first celebrated in Westminster Abbey, where the remains of that great musician were deposited.

The architectural arrangements for the reception of their majesties and the first personages in the kingdom at the east end, for upwards of five hundred musicians in the orchestra, and for nearly four thousand persons in the area and galleries, being all in perfect harmony with the venerable style of the abbey, added incalculably to the effect, and constituted altogether the grandest and most magnificent spectacle that the imagination can conceive. The choral bands were placed on steps in the side aisles, gradually ascending beyond the sight of the audience. The principal singers were ranged in front of the orchestra as at oratorios, accompanied by the choirs of St. Paul, the Abbey, Windsor, and the Chapel Royal.

Without even a Coryphæus to beat time, the performance was not less remarkable for the multiplicity of voices and instruments employed, than for accuracy and precision. The united harmony and power of this stupendous band, combined with the solemnity of the occasion, and the august character of the sacred building, might well be termed sublime in their effect, awakening new and exquisite sensations in the lovers of the art, and even electrifying those who had never before received pleasure from musical sounds. In 1785, the band, vocal and instrumental, amounted to 616; in 1786, to 741; in 1787, to 806: and in subsequent years to still greater numbers. The members and guardians of the musical fund, enlarged by these commemorations of Handel, are now incorporated under the title of "Royal Society of Musicians."

The first memorable occurrence at the King's Theatre, in the year 1788, was the exhibition of a new dance by the celebrated M. Noverre, called Cupid and Psyche, which so enraptured the spectators, that Noverre was unanimously called for to receive on the stage the honours due to his talents. He was led forward by Vestris and Hilligsburg,

and crowned with laurel by them, the other principal dancers, and all the *figuranti* who had been employed. This, though common in France, was unprecedented in England.

Of these times the most eminent Italian singers were Pacchierotti, Rubinelli, and Marchesi. In discriminating their several excellences, Dr. Burney has particularly praised the sweet and touching voice of Pacchierotti, his fine shake, his exquisite taste, his great fancy, and his divine expression in pathetic songs: of Rubinelli's voice, the fulness, steadiness, and majesty, the accuracy of his intonations, his judicious graces: of Marchesi's voice, the elegance and flexibility, his grandeur in recitative, and his inexhaustible fancy in embellishments.

The opera management of Sir John Gallini, who had associated himself with Mr. Taylor, was unpropitious, and terminated calamitously. On the 18th of June, 1789, a fire broke out while the dancers were practising a new ballet, and the whole of this superb edifice, which had been erected by Sir John Vanbrugh, and first opened in 1705, was, in less than two hours, utterly destroyed. A new and splendid theatre rose from its ruins, which, after some delay from legal difficulties, was at length first opened as an Italian Opera-house on the 26th of January, 1793. Madame Banti made her debut at this house in the spring of the following season, and was received with an enthusiasm due to her admirable acting, perfect intonation, and great power of expression, which enabled her not only to delight the ear, but to penetrate the heart. In the place of this fascinating singer, Mrs. Billington appeared as *prima donna* in the year 1802. Three seasons afterward the public were not only pleased but astonished by the powers of Madame Grassini, especially when it was known that the compass of her voice did not exceed eight or ten notes. The admiration she excited was in the following year divided with the celebrated Catalani, who first appeared in the character of Semiramide, and amazed as well as fascinated the audience by her almost supernatural performances. As an actress equally eminent in the tragic and comic scene, she has never been surpassed, perhaps never equalled, on the opera stage. Her voice transcends all that had been supposed possible in the human organ, combining with its

flexibility and clearness such an unrivalled volume, that it can penetrate through the loudest chorus and most complete band in the kingdom. We forbear from recapitulating the vocal performers who have succeeded her, or from enlarging upon the state of music in England subsequently to her departure, since both these subjects must be familiar to the majority of our readers. Nor is it our purpose to discuss the theory of music as an art. Our little work professes to be rather superficial and amusing, than profound and scientific. The professor and connoisseur will have recourse to disquisitions much more minute than those which our narrow limits can be supposed to admit.*

CHAPTER XXII.

Sedentary Amusements:—Playing-cards

"Behold four kings in majesty revered,
With hoary whiskers and a forked beard;
And four fair queens, whose hands sustain a flower,
Th' expressive emblem of their softer power:
Four knaves in garbs succinct, a trusty band,
Caps on their heads, and halberts in their hand;
And party-coloured troops, a shining train,
Drawn forth to combat on the velvet plain."

Rape of the Lock, canto 3.

"A GRAVE elderly gentleman," says the facetious Mr. Joseph Mills, "having once observed to a female relative, who was an indefatigable whist-player, that there was a great deal of time lost at cards, the lady replied, with infinite *naïveté*, 'what! in shuffling and cutting? Ay, so there is, but how can we avoid it?'" This anecdote occurred involuntarily to the writer, when he recollected that he was no practitioner in any of the various and profound arts emanating from fifty-two quadrangular pieces of stamped pasteboard; that he had elsewhere, writing, perhaps, with-

* Sir John Hawkins's General History of Music, 5, vols. 4to. and Dr. Burney's work on the same subject, are the most full and complete. De Burgh's Anecdotes are principally compiled from these sources, but being in narrower compass, 3 vols 8vo. they offer a greater facility of reference

out due consideration of the subject, expressed a coincidence in opinion with the grave elderly gentleman aforesaid; and that he was nevertheless about to commit the very offence against which he had inveighed, by giving up a portion of his time to cards. He has no defence to offer, nor is he aware that any is required. Cards, when not indulged to excess, or made the instruments of gambling, are an innocent and in many instances, a beneficial recreation; they have engaged no small portion of human time and attention, and offer therefore an excusable, and by no means uninteresting subject of inquiry. That they have afforded scope for much deep investigation, profound learning, and ingenious hypothesis, must be manifest to any one who has consulted the elaborate and handsomely illustrated quarto of Mr. Samuel Weller Singer,* which, being by far the most curious and comprehensive work upon the subject, has chiefly supplied us with materials for the ensuing summary.

The commonly received opinion that cards were invented in France, about the close of the fourteenth century, for the amusement of Charles VI., while he was afflicted with mental derangement, is proved to be erroneous, their existence being traced to a much earlier period. Mention is made of them in the Annals of Provence, about the year 1361, when it appears that the knave (*valet*) was designated by the name of *Tuchim*, an appellation bestowed upon a formidable band of robbers who were then ravaging the *Comtat Venaissin;* and a recent discovery in a MS. belonging to M. Lancelot, shows that they were known twenty years earlier. It appears that the Germans became acquainted with them about the same time as the French. That they originated with the latter nation has been inferred from the *fleur-de-lis* being found in every court-card: but these are likewise found among the ornaments of the Romans, at a remote period; on the sceptres and crowns of the emperors of the west, in the middle ages, and on those of the kings of England before the Norman conquest. The earliest cards, moreover, of which specimens are extant do not bear this mark of French origin.

* Researches into the History of Playing-cards; with illustrations of the Origin of Engraving and Printing on Wood. 4to. London, 1816. Of this work only two hundred and fifty copies were printed.

Spain has found a champion for her claims to the honour of this invention in the Abbé Rive; and it is certain that a prohibitory edict against the usage of cards was published by John I., King of Castile, in 1387. In favour of the Spaniards, it is urged that their language has supplied the names of some of the cards, and of many of the most ancient games, such as primero, and the principal card in the game, quinola; ombre, and the cards spadille, manille, basto, punto, matador, quadrille, &c. The suit of clubs upon the Spanish cards is not the trefoil, as with us, but positively clubs or cudgels, of which we retain the name, though we have lost the figure: the original name is bastos. The spades are swords, called in Spain espadas; in which instance we retain the name, and some faint resemblance of the figure. These being proofs of early adoption rather than invention, it has been surmised that the Spaniards derived their knowledge of cards immediately from their Moorish invaders; especially as the name bestowed upon them in the Spanish language seems to be Arabic. At that time the Moors were an enlightened people, compared with the inhabitants of Europe; and as it is acknowledged that we are indebted to them for the dawn of science and letters, and certainly for the game of chess, why may not playing-cards have proceeded from the same source?

The romances of the eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries, although they record the manners and amusements of those times with great minuteness, make no mention of cards; whence we may fairly conclude that they were then unknown in Europe, while there appear such striking analogies between the game of chess and cards in their first simple form, that it is not unreasonable to deduce them both from the same eastern source. In the early cards we have the king, knight, and knave, and the numerical cards, or common soldiers. The oriental game of chess has also its king, vizier, and horseman, and its pauns, or common soldiers; but the parties at cards are doubled; there are four instead of two of each, which is the only variation. There were only thirty-six cards in the original eastern pack; the more complicated one was undoubtedly of later invention.

Perhaps the English derived their first knowledge of cards from the crusaders, rather than from their continental

neighbours. That they were in use some time previously to 1464 cannot be doubted; for in the parliament-rolls of that year they are mentioned among other articles which are not to be imported. Had they been introduced previously to the year 1400, when Chaucer died, he would probably have referred to them; yet in speaking of amusements, he only says—"They dancen, and they play at ches and tables." We have, in fact, very few allusions to this diversion until after the year 1500; but it must have been common in the reign of Henry VII., among whose private expenses money for losses at cards appears to have been several times issued.

Although we cannot assent to the common opinion that cards were invented by the French in the fourteenth century, it should seem that about this time the figures and suits underwent a change, possibly in France, and that their present forms were then first adopted. According to an explanation which has been given of the figures, the queen of spades, which in the early French cards is named Pallas, was meant to represent Joan of Arc, the Maid of Orleans; the king of spades (pique) bears the name of *David*; that of clubs (trefle), the name of Alexander; that of hearts (cœurs), *Charlemagne*; and that of diamonds (carreaux), *Cæsar*. The knave of spades is called *Ogier*; that of clubs, *Launcelot*; that of hearts, *La Hire*; and that of diamonds, *Hector*. The queens of spades, clubs, hearts, and diamonds are respectively named *Pallas*, *Argine*, *Judic*, and *Rachel*.

Every game may be considered a species of combat, particularly that of cards, and we find accordingly that four warlike monarchs were chosen for the kings; the knaves (*valets*) were symbolical of the vassals of feudal times, in whom consisted the principal strength of the state; the other cards refer to the residue of the people of whom the armies were composed. The queen appears to have been introduced by the gallantry of the French. The games of ombre and quadrille, which seem by their nature to have taken their rise in a chivalric age, are of Spanish origin, and still continue to be favourites with the people of the Peninsula. The pack with which they are played, consists, like the German one, of forty-eight cards only, the tens in the former and the aces in the latter being omitted. Their suits, similar to those of the Italians, are what have

been called the *trappola* suits, presumed to be of eastern origin.

In Germany the suits of cards were at an early period termed *schellen*, bells; *hertzen*, hearts; *grün*, green; and *eicheln*, acorns; devices for which other objects were sometimes substituted, such as the human figure, animals, birds, plants, fruits, and flowers. Like other nations they subsequently invented games of their own: landsknecht or lansquenet is the oldest German game. Its name, which signifies a particular description of foot-soldier, intimates that it was invented, or at least first played, by the military, possibly at the commencement of the war in the Netherlands under Maximilian I., about the year 1494, when a body of the landsknechte were enrolled in the service of the emperor.

The European change in the suits has been explained, on the supposition that the original eastern cards represented allegorically the orders or ranks of society, and that the Europeans in their figures had the same object in view. Thus the suits in the Italian and Spanish cards have been said to signify, by *spade* or swords, the nobility; *cappe*, caps or chalices, the clergy; *denari*, money, the citizens; *bastoni*, clubs or sticks, the peasantry. Illustrating the French suits in the same manner, *pique*, intended for the point of a lance or pike, used by the knights, would signify the first order, or nobles: *cœur*, hearts (sounding like chœur, a choir), denoted the clergy: *trefle*, clover or trefoil, applied to the husbandmen, who formed the middle class of the community, when commerce and manufactures were little known: *carreau*, the end or head of an arrow, represented the vassals, from among whom the common soldiers or archers were taken. Interpreting in the same symbolical manner the German suits, we find that *schellen*, little bells, were anciently the ornaments of princely dresses; and that great personages, as a mark of their quality, generally carried a hawk, to whose legs bells were attached. These, therefore, are used as a type of that order of society. Hearts denote the clergy, as in the French cards; green, or leaves, has the same relation to the husbandman as trefle; and acorns, or oak, symbolize the woodman, peasants, and slaves. The analogy appears striking, and the deductions are ingenious; but whether any such allegory was intended

by the inventors of cards must ever remain a matter of doubt.

Our English names of the suits are in part adopted from the Spanish, and partly from the French; yet it is singular that the suits themselves are altogether those of the latter nation. To the trefle, or trefoil leaf, we have applied the Spanish term bastos, translating it literally into clubs. Nor have we faithfully rendered the French word carreaux by diamonds. The figured or court-cards were formerly called coat-cards; and Strutt says, "I conceive the name implied coated figures, that is, men and women, who wore coats, in contradistinction to the other devices of flowers and animals, not of the human species."

A modern writer has expressed his surprise that no improvement has taken place in the figures on cards. Had he been acquainted with the beautiful figured cards produced in Germany nearly three centuries ago, of some of which specimens are given in Mr. Singer's elaborate work, it would have increased his surprise that we should have remained content with the grotesque and unmeaning impressions upon ours, when such admirable examples had been held out to us by our neighbours. But even the German cards have now degenerated into the same kind of rudeness, all recent attempts at introducing better designs having failed both there and in France. Some ingenious card-makers in England have lately endeavoured to introduce improved specimens, both as to drawing and colouring; but such is the force of habit, that although the attempt has been applauded, and the cards admired, they have been purchased rather as curiosities than for use, and the old barbarous daubings have maintained their ground.

It has been a question whence the grotesque figures on modern court-cards could have been derived; they bear no distant resemblance to some of the representations among the Chinese, whose cards are charged with similar designs; but it is impossible to determine where and by whom they were first adopted. Perhaps we ought to seek no further than the rude woodcuts of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, many of which are as unlike the human figure as are the singular objects depicted on our cards.

Let it not be supposed that cards have never been applied to higher purposes than those of amusement. At different

periods they have been extensively, and, as we are told, not unsuccessfully used as a means of instruction. The first who sought to make them subservient to this object was Thomas Murner, a learned Minorite friar of the sixteenth century, who, being engaged in teaching philosophy at Friburg, perceived that his young pupils were disgusted with the formalities of a logical treatise, placed in their hands to teach them the terms of dialectic science.

He imagined, in consequence, a new mode of exciting their attention to this dry and repulsive study, by adapting it to a pleasing recreation in the form of a game of cards, which proved so successful, that the extraordinary progress of his scholars caused him to be suspected for a magician; and in order to justify himself he was obliged to disclose to the rectors of the university the means by which he had effected such wonders. This game was composed of fifty-two cards, on which were depicted bells, crabs, fish, acorns, scorpions, turbans, hearts, swallows, suns, stars, pigeons, crescents, cats, shields, crowns, and serpents; but in what manner these objects were applied to the inculcation of logical rules and dialectic terms we shall not attempt to describe; as we doubt whether the most profound logician of the present day would be able to comprehend it. It appears to have been a scheme of artificial memory applied to this particular science. We have in our own times more than one practical system of mnemonics, or *reminiscentia numeralis*, wherein numbers and various unmeaning objects are used for the purpose of giving a kind of locality to ideas, upon the principle of association. Erasmus, in one of his dialogues,* has ridiculed these royal roads to the sciences, and seems to have had in view the then recent system of Murner, whose success gave rise, at a subsequent period, to numerous imitations and extensions of his discovery, which was applied not only to those studies that merely require sight and memory, such as geography, chronology, mythology, history, and others; but also to those which demand

* *Ars Notoria.* Erasmi Colloquia. p. 569. "*Erasm.* Audio artem esse quamdam notoriam, quæ hæc præstet, ut Homo, minimo negotio, perdiscat omnes disciplinas liberales. *Dis:* Quid audio? vidisti codicem? *Erasm:* varias animantium formas, draconum, leonum, leopardorum, variosque circulos, et in his descriptas voces, partim Græcas, partim Latinas, aliasque Barbaricarum linguarum. *Dis:* Ego aliam artem non novi quàm curam, amorem, et assiduitatem."

thought and reasoning, such as logic and jurisprudence. In the commencement of the seventeenth century an astonishing number of games was published upon the model of Murner's, and there is scarcely a branch of juvenile education which has not been thus treated in our own days.

M. De Brianville published a set of heraldic cards at Lyons, in 1660, and, as he composed his game of the arms of the sovereign princes of the north, of Italy, Spain, and France, some of the arms were necessarily distributed on the knaves, which gave such umbrage to the parties thus scurvily treated, that the unlucky inventor of the game was prosecuted, his plates were seized by the magistrates, and he was obliged to conciliate favour by converting his knaves into princes and knights. A treatise on morals, discipline, and conversation, in the form of a game at cards, is referred to by Echard, as existing among the imperial MSS. at Vienna, but he does not mention the date of it. Packs of cards, or rather sets of prints, are extant, intended as satires upon the Spanish invasion, the Catholic James and his queen, the South Sea bubble; and other subjects. Sir John Harrington, in his "Apologie for Poetry," makes mention also of a play, in which the game of cards seems to have been allegorized.—"Or to speake of a London comedie, how much good matter, yea, and matter of state, is there in that comedie called the Play of the Cards? In which it is showed how foure parasiticall knaves robbe the foure principal vocations of the realme, videlicet—the vocation of souldiers, schollers, marchants, and husbandmen." It is evident that the notion of the four suits being intended to represent the four casts or orders of society, had obtained ground in England at this early period.

We have already stated that cards, like most other games, have a martial character, the queen being a comparatively modern introduction of the French, and the pack consisting originally of kings, knights, squires, and common soldiers. Ombre, quadrille, and lansquenet, bear marks of their military origin; and in the seventeenth century a game was commonly played in France, called "Le Jeu de la Guerre," consisting of a piquet pack, with the addition of four other cards, called *strength*, *death*, the *general*, and the *prisoner of war*. Upon the ace of spades was represented a cannonier; upon that of clubs a soldier with a drawn

'sword, designating the infantry; upon that of diamonds, a battalion; and the ace of hearts represented the cavalry. It was more a game of chance than skill; in which respect, perhaps, the inventor thought that it bore a closer resemblance to war.

Primero, prime, and primavista are one and the same game, the popularity of which during the reign of Elizabeth is apparent from the frequent mention of it in the writers of that time. Shakspeare speaks of Henry VIII. playing at primero with the Duke of Suffolk, and makes Falstaff exclaim, "I never prospered since I forswore myself at primero." That it was the court game is evidenced in a very curious picture described by Mr. Barrington, in the Archæologia, which represents Lord Burleigh playing at this pastime with three other noblemen. Primero continued to be the most fashionable game throughout the reigns of Henry VIII., Edward VI., Mary, Elizabeth, and James. In the Earl of Northumberland's letters about the powder-plot, we find that Josceline Percy was playing at primero *on Sunday*, when his uncle, the conspirator, called on him at Essex House: and in the Sydney Papers there is an account of a quarrel between Lord Southampton and one Ambrose Willoughby, on account of the former persisting to play at primero in the presence chamber after the queen had retired to rest. From an epigram of Sir John Harrington we learn that the games most in vogue in this queen's reign were prime or primero, mawe, loadam, noddy, bankerout, and lavolta, if this last be not rather an expression used at play, than the name of a game.

Bishop Latimer in his sermons would occasionally avail himself of the card terms, which he called dealing out Christianity: and Fuller records a country minister, who, preaching from Romans xii. 13, "As God has dealt to every man the measure of faith," prosecuted the metaphor of dealing, urging his hearers to play above-board, not to pocket cards, but to follow suit, &c.; a mode of preaching which was admirably effectual in those days, though it would be deemed highly indecorous in ours.

It appears from a passage in the Gull's Hornbook, published in the reign of James I., that the spectators at the playhouse amused themselves with cards while waiting for the commencement of the performance.

Mawe, the second game mentioned by Sir John Harrington, and one of which we find frequent notices in our earlier writers, was played with a piquet pack of thirty-six cards, and any number of persons from two to six may form the party. When six play, a card is turned up all round, and those who have the three highest are partners, and are opposed to the three lowest: when four only play, it is two against two, as at whist. This game had a variety of strict rules and technical terms which it would be tedious to recapitulate.

Noddy seems to have borne some resemblance to the more recent and childish game of *Beat the knave out of doors*, which is mentioned, together with *Ruff and new coat*, in Heywood's play of *A Woman killed with Kindness*.

Gleek is joined with primero in Green's *Tu quoque*, where one of the characters proposes to play at twelvepenny gleek, but the other insists on making it for a crown at least. A long account of this game is given in the Complete Gamester, where it is called "a noble and delightful game and recreation." Duchat says it derives its name from the German *gluck*—hazard, luck, chance. The holding of three cards of one suit, as three kings, three knaves, three aces, &c. constitutes the *gleek*.

Bankerout is probably the same with bankfalet, described in the Complete Gamester. At this game the cards must be cut into as many parcels as there are players, or more, as may be agreed. Every one stakes as much on his own card as he chooses, or if there be any supernumerary parcels, any one may stake on them. The dealer pays to every player whose card is superior to his, and receives from every one whose card is inferior. The best cards are the aces, and of these diamonds are the highest; then hearts, clubs, and lastly spades. Of the other cards, the power is the same as at whist. We are informed that the modern name of this amusement is blind hazard.

Ombre owes its invention to the Spaniards, and is said to partake of the gravity which is the peculiar character of that nation. It is called *Il Hombre*, or the man, and was so named, says Bullet, on account of the deep thought and reflection it requires, which render it a game worthy the attention of man." "There are several sorts of ombre," says the Complete Gamester, "but that which is the chief

is called renegado, at which three only can play, to whom are dealt nine cards apiece, so that by discarding the eights, nines, and tens, there will remain thirteen cards in the stock." Mr. Barrington* says it was probably introduced into this country by Catharine of Portugal, the queen of Charles II., as Waller hath a poem "on a card torn at ombre by the queen." It continued to be in vogue for some time in the last century, for it is Belinda's game, in the Rape of the Lock, where every incident in the whole deal is so accurately described that when ombre is forgotten (and it is almost so already), it may be revived with posterity from that delightful poem. Many of our readers will doubtless recollect to have seen among old furniture some of the three-cornered tables which were made purposely for ombre. Attention and quietness are said to be absolutely necessary for this game; for if a player be ever so expert, he will be apt to fall into mistakes if his thoughts are diverted, or he is disturbed by the conversation of by-standers. The Spaniards occasionally called this game manilla, from the name of the second of the matadores, which latter are termed killing-cards, because the man who in the bull-feast despatches the animal is designated the matador. The first is the ace of spades, termed espadilla; the second, which is the seven, is a red suit; the deuce is black, and is called manilla. The ace of clubs, which is the third, bears the name of basto; the fourth, a red ace, is called punto, literally the point or ace.

Quadrille, which is only another species of ombre, appears to have superseded it, and to have been very popular in England until whist began to be played upon scientific principles. Although it was a Spanish name, it has been claimed as a French invention, and was a great favourite with the ladies, as requiring much less attention than ombre. There was a modification of it which might be played by three persons, but it is generally considered far inferior to the game by four.

Reverses is a French game, supposed to have been invented in the court of Francis I., the gayety of whose disposition attracted around him all the beauty of his dominions. For variety's sake the order and construction of this game

* Archæologia, vol. viii. 152

were entirely the reverse of those already in use, and hence its name. The lowest card had the preference, and it was an advantage to make no tricks. The knave of hearts was called the quinola, as at primero. The strange incongruity of this inverted order of things made the Spaniards, when the game became known to them, give it the appropriate name of *La gana pierde*—the winner loses.

Bassett, which is said by Dr. Johnson to have been invented at Venice, was certainly known in Italy as early as the fifteenth century, for it is mentioned in a poem by Lorenzo de Medici. At the close of the seventeenth it seems to have been a fashionable game in England. *Il Frusso*, the flush, is included in Rabelais's catalogue of the games at which Gargantua played; and Duchot says it was in vogue at the court of Lewis XII.

Trump, which was probably the triunfo of the Italians, and the triomphe of the French, is perhaps of equal antiquity in England with primero, and at the latter end of the sixteenth century was very common among the inferior classes. In Gammer Gurton's Needle, first acted in 1561, Dame Chat says to Diccan: "We be set at *trump*, man, hard by the fire; thou shalt set upon the king." This game is thought to have borne some resemblance to the modern game of whist: the only points of dissimilarity are, that more or less than four persons might play at trump; that all the cards were not dealt out; and that the dealer had the privilege of discarding some and taking in others from the stock.

Whist, says the Complete Gamester, printed in 1680, "Is so common in all parts of England, that every child almost of eight years old, hath a competent knowledge of that recreation." Mr. Barrington, however, states that it was not played upon principles until about the year 1730, when it was much studied by a set of gentlemen who frequented the Crown Coffee-house in Bedford-row, before which time it had chiefly been confined to the servants' hall with *All Fours* and *Put*. The instructions for playing this game, printed by Cotton in 1680, are given in the appendix to Mr. Singer's elaborate researches, in order that the modern whist-player may compare them with the scientific and profound treatise of Mr. Hoyle. At the commencement of the last century, according to Swift, it was a

favourite pastime with clergymen, who played the game with swabbers; these were certain cards by which the holder was entitled to a part of the stake, in the same manner that the claim is made for the aces at quadrille. The following explanations have been given of some of the terms usually employed at this game. Six or nine *love* is thought to have been derived from the old Scottish word of *luff*, or hand, so that *six luff* will mean so many in hand, or more than the adversary. The queen of clubs is sometimes called Queen Bess, probably because that queen is recorded to have been of a swarthy complexion: the nine of diamonds has been nicknamed the curse of Scotland, because every ninth monarch of that nation was a bad king; and not, as is generally supposed, because the Duke of Cumberland, the night before the battle of Culloden, accidentally wrote his orders for refusing quarter upon the back of this card.

Piquet is generally admitted to be of French origin, but the date of its invention cannot be ascertained, though it is recorded as being popular in 1668. The advocates of this game maintain it to be one of the most amusing and complete that are played with cards, although it has in most places been superseded by whist. That its name imports it to be of military origin we have already stated. A *piquet* is a certain number of men chosen by companies to be ready to mount at the shortest notice.

All attempts at allegorizing cards, or making them subservient to the purpose of inculcating morals or useful knowledge of any kind, have been attended with but limited success; while it is to be feared that these very means may have sometimes awakened a taste for play, where it would not otherwise have existed. An elegant moralist has been led to the following reflections, which the most inveterate card-player must allow to be just.

"I must confess, I think it below reasonable creatures to be altogether conversant in such diversions as are merely innocent, and have nothing else to recommend them but that there is no hurt in them. Whether any kind of gaming has even this much to say for itself I shall not determine; but I think it very wonderful to see persons of the best sense passing away a dozen hours together in shuffling and dividing a pack of cards, with no other conversation than what is

made up of a few game-phrases, and no other ideas but those of black or red spots ranged together in different figures Would not a man laugh to hear one of this species complaining that life is short?"*

The celebrated Mr. Locke is reported to have been once in company with three distinguished noblemen, his contemporaries, the Lords Shaftesbury, Halifax, and Anglesea, who proposed cards, when Mr. Locke declined playing, saying he would amuse himself by looking on. During the time these noblemen were at play, he was observed to busy himself by writing in his table-book. At the conclusion of their play, Lord Anglesea's curiosity prompted him to ask Locke what he had been writing. His answer was, "in order that none of the advantages of your conversation might be lost, I have taken notes of it;" and producing his note-book, it was found to be the fact. The inanity of such a collection of disjointed jargon, it is said, had the desired effect on the three noble philosophers; the reproof was not lost upon them, and cards were never again attempted to be substituted for rational conversation, at least in the presence of Mr. Locke.

Yet cards are thought to have been instrumental to the progress of civilization, in having tended to humanize man, by bringing him more into female society. Surely this is a satire upon the most lovely part of the creation; and however necessary they may have been formerly, the present improved state of the world, and the just rank which women are now enabled, from superior education, to take in society, render cards no longer needful for this purpose. A zealous Spaniard, early in the seventeenth century, loudly exclaims against the use of them—"To see cards in the hands of a woman," says he, "appears as unnatural as to see a soldier with a distaff." Yet, in a mixed and numerous party, they may still be found to have their uses. "Let not cards, therefore, be depreciated; a happy invention, which, adapted equally to every capacity, removes the invidious distinctions of nature, bestows on fools the pre-eminence of genius, or reduces wit and wisdom to the level of folly."†

The reader of Mr. Singer's work, from which these obser-

* Spectator, No. 93.

† Henry's History of Great Britain, vol. xii. p. 385

vations and the preceding notices have been gleaned, will not fail to add, in further vindication of the amusement in question, that it can never be deemed trifling or unimportant, since it has called into exercise so much varied and extensive learning, and produced so curious and elaborate a quarto as the "Researches into the History of Playing-cards."

CHAPTER XXIII.

Sedentary Amusements.—Chess.

"Dicite, Seriades Nymphæ, certamina tanta
Carminibus prorsus vatum illibata priorum:
Vos hujus ludi in primis meminisse necesse est:
Vos primæ studia hæc Italis monstrastis in oris
Scacchidis egregiæ."

Hieronymus Vida.

If we are to believe our motto, and the learned Vida, whose Latin poem entitled "Scacchiæ Ludus" obtained for him the patronage of Leo X. and the bishopric of Alba, the game which he celebrates was invented by the Serian nymphs in memory of their sister Scacchis, from whom it took the Latin name of Scacchiæ Ludus, whence is derived the French word Echecs, and our English term Chess. It was a happy choice, says Dr. Warton, to write a poem on chess; nor is the execution less happy. The various stratagems and manifold intricacies of this ingenious game, so difficult to be described in Latin, are here expressed with the greatest perspicuity and elegance; so that perhaps the game might be learned from this description. Our English poet Pope not only speaks of the author as

Immortal Vida, on whose honour'd brow,
The poet's lays and critic's ivy grow,

but probably took from his Game of Chess the first idea of the Rape of the Lock, substituting the sylphs for the Olympian deities employed by the Bishop of Alba. Vida, who

seems to have been a better poet and Latinist than antiquary, has not found any one to support him in his fanciful derivation of the game from the nymph Scacchis. Its real origin still remains a *questio vexata* among the learned. Sarasin has an express treatise on the different opinions respecting the derivation of the Latin Scacchi, and Menage is also very full on the same head. By some, this noble or, as it is frequently called, royal pastime, is said to have originated, together with dice-playing, at the siege of Troy; others derive it from the Hebrews; and Fabricius says, that the game of chess was discovered by a celebrated Persian astronomer, one Schatrenscha, who gave it his own name, which it still bears in that country; in confirmation of which opinion Bochart adds, that *scach* is originally Persian; and that in that language Scachmat (whence our checkmate) signifies the king is dead.

Mr. Irwin, who made researches into this subject during his residence in India, maintains it to be a Chinese invention, to which effect he found a tradition current among the Brahmins; and infers, as the result of his inquiries and researches, that the confined situation and powers of the king, resembling those of a monarch in the earlier stages of the world, countenance this supposition; and that as the invention travelled westward, and descended to later times, the sovercign prerogative extended itself, until it became unlimited, as in our present state of the game: that the agency of the princes, in lieu of the queen, who does not exist in the oriental chess-board, bespeaks forcibly the nature of the Chinese customs, which exclude females from all influence or power whatever: these princes, in the passage of the game through Persia, were changed into a single vizier, or minister of state, with the enlarged portion of delegated authority that exists there; and for this vizier, the Europeans, with the same gallantry that had prompted the French to add a queen to the pack of cards, substituted a queen on the chess-board, a coincidence which confirms the oriental origin of both games. Mr. Irwin further suggests, that the painted river which divides the two parties on the Chinese chess-boards is expressive of the general face of the country, where a battle could hardly be fought without some such intervention, which the soldier is here

taught to overcome: but that on the introduction of the game into Persia, the board, in accordance with the dry nature of that region, was made to represent *terra firma*. And lastly, that the game was designed in the spirit of war to quiet the murmurs, by employing the vacant hours of a discontented soldiery, while it cherished in them a taste for tactics and the spirit of conquest. The Chinese annals date the invention of chess 379 years after the time of Confucius, or about two thousand years ago.

Sir William Jones, however, claims this invention for the Hindoos, on the authority of the Persians, who unanimously agree that it was imported into their country from the west of India in the sixth century of our era; and he traces the successive corruptions of the original Sanscrit term, through the Persians and Arabs, into *scacchi*, echecs, chess; which, by a whimsical concurrence of circumstances, has given birth to the English word *check*, and even a name to the Exchequer of Great Britain. Sir William recites the various ordinances of the Indian game, as imbodied in a set of rules, which in the original Sanscrit is written in verse, and in point of date claims considerable precedence of Vida's Latin poem upon the same subject. It is well worth the attention of any chess-lover to compare the two, which our narrow limits prevent us from attempting.

John de Vigney wrote a book which he calls the Moralization of Chess, wherein he assures us that it was invented by a philosopher named Xerxes, in the reign of Evil-merodach, King of Babylon, in order that it might engage the attention and correct the manners of that dissolute monarch. The Arabians and the Saracens, who are said to be great chess-players, have new-modelled this story, and adapted it to their own country, changing the name of the philosopher from Xerxes to Sisa.

When it was first brought into Europe it is impossible to determine, but we have good reason for supposing it to have been a favourite and fascinating pastime with persons of rank at least a century anterior to the Norman conquest. William the Conqueror, when a young man, being one day engaged at chess with the King of France's eldest son, and exasperated at something uttered by his antagonist, struck him with the chess-board, and was obliged to mak a precipitate retreat to avoid the consequences of his rash

ness. Leland records a nearly similar circumstance to have happened to the youngest son of our Henry II., when playing with Fulco Guarine, a nobleman of Shropshire. We are told by Dr. Robertson, in his History of Charles V., that John Frederic, Elector of Saxony, having been taken prisoner by Charles, was condemned to death; a decree which was intimated to him while at chess with Ernest of Brunswick, his fellow-prisoner. After a short pause, and making some reflections on the irregularity and injustice of the emperor's proceedings, he challenged his antagonist to finish the game, played with his usual ingenuity and attention; and, having won, expressed all the satisfaction usually felt on gaining such victories.

Dr. Hyde, quoting from an Arabic history of the Saracens, tells us that the Calif of Bagdad was engaged at chess with his freedman Kuthar, when a soldier rushed in to inform him that the city, which was then vigorously besieged, was on the point of being carried by assault. "Let me alone," said the calif, "for I see checkmate against Kuthar!"

In the chronicle of the Moorish kings of Grenada, we find it related that in 1396, Mehemed Balba seized upon the crown in prejudice of his elder brother Juzaf, whom he ordered to be put to death that he might secure the succession of his own son. The alcaid despatched for that purpose found the prince playing at chess with a priest. Juzaf begged hard for two hours' respite, which was denied him; at last, though with great reluctance, the officer permitted him to play out his game; but before it was finished, a messenger arrived with the news of the sudden death of Mehemed, and the unanimous election of Juzaf to the crown.

We record the following anecdote as a warning to such of our male and married readers as may be in the perilous habit of playing chess with a wife. Ferrand, Count of Flanders, having constantly defeated the countess at chess, she conceived a hatred against him, which came to such a height, that when the count was taken prisoner at the battle of Bovines, she suffered him to remain a long time in prison, though she could easily have procured his release.

Our Charles I. was thus occupied when informed that the Scots had finally resolved to sell him to the parliament;

but he was so intent upon the game that he finished it with great composure. Innumerable are the similar instances that might be adduced to prove the deep fascination which this bewitching game exercises over the minds of those who lend themselves to its seductions.

The chess-board, the number of the pieces, and the manner in which they are played, do not appear to have undergone much, if any, variation for several centuries, though the forms and names have suffered material change. The rock or fortress we have corrupted into a rook: the bishop was with us formerly an archer, while the French denominated it Alfin, and Fol, which were perversions of the original oriental term for the elephant. The ancient Persian game of chess consisted of the following pieces, which were thus named when they reached Europe:

1. *Schach*,	3. *Phil*,	5. *Ruch*,
The King.	The Elephant.	The Dromedary.
2. *Pherz*,	4. *Aspen Suar*,	6. *Beydal*,
The Vizier, or General.	The Horseman.	Foot-soldier.

Upon the introduction of the game into France the pieces were no doubt called by the Persian names, but in process of time these were partly changed by translation, and partly modified by French terminations. *Schach* was converted by translation into *Roy*, the king. Pherz, the vizier, became *Fercie*, *Fierce*, *Fierge*, *Vierge*, and was of course at last converted into a lady, *Dame*. The elephant, *Phil*, was easily altered into *Fol*, or the modern *Fou*. Of the horseman, *Aspen Suar*, they made the cavalier or knight. The dromedary, *Ruch*, was changed into a castle, *tour* or tower: probably from being confounded with the elephant, which is usually represented carrying a castle. The foot-soldiers, *Beydal*, were retained by the name of *Pietons*, or *Pions*, whence our pawns.

Pleasure was afforded to the early chess-player, not only from the nice and abstruse nature of the game itself, but from its being considered a perpetual allegory, or emblem of state policy, a character of which it is not altogether undeserving, since we have seen that in its westward progress it was adapted to the institutions of the countries that fostered it. Our poet Denham recognises its sage and instructive nature.

This game the Persian magi did invent,
The force of Eastern wisdom to express;
From thence to busy Europeans sent,
And styled, by modern Lombards, pensive chess.

But the political and moral purposes of the game are more curiously set forth in a short poem by Mr. Craig, prefixed to an old translation of Vida, which is now lying before us. Of these verses we shall extract a few, not for their intrinsic merit, which is moderate enough, but to exemplify the writer's notions of the high mysteries contained in the game, as well as to relieve for a moment the prosaic dulness of our own labours.

A monarch strongly guarded here we view,
By his own consort and his clergy too.
Next those, two knights their royal sire attend,
And two steep rocks are planted at each end.—
To clear the way before this courtly throng,
Eight pawns as private soldiers march along;
Enfans perdus! like heroes stout and brave,
Risk their own lives the sovereign to save—
All in their progress forming a complete
And perfect emblem of the game of state

The bishop's nearness to the royal pair
Points that it still should be a prince's care
To trust and cherish priests of God, because
It is presumed they best explain his laws
To his vicegerent; and in oblique ways
Traverse and mystic to the vulgar eyes,
Perfect their measures, &c.

Though from the king the knights more distant be,
Yet by their crooked leap we often see,
The sovereign forced to fly his royal seat
And in some secret corner seek retreat;
Whereas, had any other been so bold,
Th' insulting check he could have soon controll'd,
And placed another member in the gap,
Till he should meditate his own escape.
So, there 's no danger in a government
A prince should be more cautious to prevent,
Than the revolt of nobles and the great,
For their example oft affects the state.—

Each lofty rock with its exalted towers,
Like frontier garrisons the state secures,
And sometimes as a safe asylum prove
To their own monarch, when he 's forced to move.—

The king himself but one short pace must go,
Though all the rest may rally to and fro,

Hence kings should never heedlessly expose
Their sacred persons to the assaults of foes;
The kingdom's welfare on their life depends,
And in their death the nation's safety ends.

The first deviser thought it fit the queen
Should in this warlike pastime predomine.
In ecclesiastic paths she freely moves,
And thro' the rocky way unbounded roves;
Yet must she not th' indecent footsteps trace
Of leap-skip knights, nor imitate their pace —
Although the king's prerogative is such,
That none his person or his life can touch,
Others, by their bad conduct when misled,
May be swept off the field of war as dead.
Nor does the monarch still the battle lose,
In number tho' inferior to his foes,
But by the hazard of one pawn may gain,
And prudent conduct victory obtain.

Nor must we here omit the pawns' reward,
Who, when courageous, justly are preferr'd,
If they the limits of the board can reach,
Like those who first assault a dangerous breach.—

This to our view doth fully represent
Virtue's reward, and vice's punishment;—
So active minds themselves to glory raise,
While slothful cowards their own souls debase

The game thus ended, kings with pawns are jumbled,
Queens, knights, rooks, bishops, all confus'dly tumbled,
Into the box, pell-mell, are headlong toss'd,
And all their grandeur in oblivion lost.—
Thus monarchs with their meanest subjects must
Be one day levell'd in their native dust,
So short-liv'd, fading, vain, and transitory,
That shadow of a phantom—human glory!

It would be hardly fair towards the historian and poet-laureate of the game of chess to dismiss the subject without a short specimen of Marcus Hieronymus Vida, whom Mr. Roscoe lauds for his admirable talent of uniting a considerable portion of classical elegance, and often dignity, with the utmost facility and clearness. Whether his style deserve the praise of being a just mixture of Virgil and Lucretius we leave the reader to determine; so far as a judgment may be formed from so short a citation. Jupiter, enthroned in all his state, thus issues his commands to the deities, as to the parts they are to act in a pending game of chess between an Albian and an Ethiopian prince.

"Hos Pater adversis solos decernere jussit
Inter se studiis, et judicra bella fovere,
Ac partes tutari ambas, quas vellet uterque:
Nec non proposuit victori præmia digna.—
Dii magni sedère: Deum stat turba minorum
Circumfusa; caveat sed lege, et fœdere pacto,
Ne quisquam, voce aut nutu, ludentibus ausit
Prævisos monstrare ictus.—Quem denique primum
Sors inferre aciem vocet, atque invadere Martem
Quæ situm: primumque locum certaminis Albo
Ductori tulit, ut quem vellet primus in hostem
Mitteret: Id sanè magni referre putabant.—
Tum tacitus secum versat, quem ducere contrà
Conveniat; peditemque jubet procedere campum
In medium, qui Reginam dirimebat ab hoste."

CHAPTER XXIV.

English Drama.

"Hard is his lot that here by fortune placed,
Must watch the wild vicissitudes of taste;
With every meteor of caprice must play,
And chase the new-blown bubbles of the day.
Ah! let not censure term our fate our choice,
The stage but echoes back the public voice;
The drama's laws the drama's patrons give,
For we, that live to please, must please to live.
Then prompt no more the follies you decry,
As tyrants doom their tools of guilt to die."

Dr. Johnson.

Of the origin of the drama among the Greeks and Romans we have already spoken in our fourth chapter, where we have shown that it had its source in the public games and religious festivals, at which it was customary to celebrate the life and exploits of the deity or hero in whose honour they were instituted. It is not our purpose to enter into the much-agitated controversy concerning the origin of the modern drama in Europe; for whether it arose in France or Italy, among the troubadours of Provence or the shepherds in Calabria, it will be sufficient for our purpose to contend that it was a distinct species of itself, and not a revival of the ancient drama; that it was of Gothic rather

than of classic birth; and that it ought not, therefore, to be bound by the rules or compared with the merits of its Grecian predecessor. Had Shakspeare been circumscribed by the ancient dramatic laws, of which he was probably ignorant, and which he certainly did not mean to follow, we should have had cold and tame imitation, instead of the fiery flights of original genius; and the dramatic glory of England would have suffered a lamentable eclipse.

Nothing, indeed, is more superfluous than our inquiries into the origin of great and useful inventions; nothing more vain than the keen contests among rival nations for the honour of their first discovery: for the principles of human nature being the same in all parts of the world, there may be often coincident productions at the two extremities of the globe, absolutely identical in their general nature, and yet both fully entitled to the merit of being original. Imitation is not less inherent in our nature than the passions; and if these were the sources of poetry in general, the former must in all ages have given rise to dramatic representations. It is natural for indolent persons, who have no resources in their arts or learning against the tediousness of life, to delight in assuming fictitious characters, as we see children at school fond of acting kings and heroes, and of rudely dramatising the stories which have made the most vivid impressions upon their fancy. What thus began in amusement was soon found to be susceptible of a much higher and nobler application. As example is the strongest and most effectual manner of enforcing the precepts of wisdom, it became manifest that a just theatrical representation might be rendered a humanizing and instructive academy; with this special advantage, that the young spectator might contemplate a picture of human nature, and learn the manners of the world without encountering its perils.

"Even some of the inspired writings have been considered dramatical by very pious persons. The illustrious Bossuet divides the Song of Solomon into various scenes: the Book of Job, equally valuable for its great antiquity and for the noble strain of moral poetry in which it is composed, has been esteemed a regular drama; and Milton tells us that a learned critic distributed the Apocalypse into several acts, distinguished by a chorus of angels. Gregory

of Nazianzen, a poet and a father of the church, persuaded the people of Byzantium to represent on their theatre some chosen stories of the Old and New Testament, and to banish from their stage the profane compositions of Sophocles and Euripides. The Jews themselves had the stories of the Old Testament exhibited in the dramatic form; part of a Jewish piece on the subject of Exodus is preserved in Greek iambics, written by one Ezekiel, who styles himself the poet of the Hebrews."*

A custom of representing at every solemn festival some event recorded in Scripture, became almost general nearly at the same period, in the south, the west, and even in the north of Europe; in the two latter of which divisions the poems of Gregory and the language of the Greeks were wholly unknown; so that neither can have borrowed their mysteries from Constantinople. In both these instances they probably originated in the pious desire of disseminating a knowledge of the Bible, at a time when the mass of the people were unable to read, and when even those who possessed that rare qualification, could not betake themselves to the Scriptures, since they were mostly restricted to the Latin language. Although the clergy in many instances opposed themselves to any version of the sacred writings in the vulgar tongue, they do not seem to have objected to the translating into action, or dramatising such portions of them as were most susceptible of being thus illustrated. Of these pious, or as we should now rather say profane, performances, the church was the theatre; the ecclesiastics themselves or their scholars were the performers; and it appears that they were not altogether disinterested teachers, nor content with such scriptural knowledge or moral instruction as could be thus conveyed, since they derived a pecuniary profit from their exhibitions. These were termed mysteries and miracles, because they inculcated the profound doctrines of Christianity, and represented the miracles wrought by the great founders of the faith and their successors, as well as the sufferings of the martyrs.

*The principal characters of this drama are Moses, Sepphora, and ὁ Θεος ἀπὸ βατου, "God speaking from the bush." Moses delivers the prologue in a speech of sixty lines, and his rod is changed into a serpent upon the stage.—See *The Origin of the English Drama, by Thomas Hawkins*, p. 5.

No other species of drama was known at Rome and Florence in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The passion of our Saviour was performed in the Coliseum; and if their music at that period had been as perfect as it is now,—if the poetry of so awful a piece had been composed by a Metastasio, and the choral part by a Pergolesi, the effect upon a devout people, who are at the same time passionate admirers of music, would have been profoundly impressive; while the stupendous extent of the building must have presented a still grander and more august spectacle than our commemoration of Handel.

It is generally imagined that the English stage rose later than the rest of its neighbours; and yet nothing is more certain than that we had theatrical entertainments almost as early as the Conquest, if we may believe Fitz Stephen, who, in his *Descriptio nobilissimæ Civitatis Londoniæ*, says, "London, instead of common interludes belonging to the theatres, has plays of a more holy subject; representations of those miracles which the holy confessors wrought, or of the sufferings wherein the glorious constancy of the martyrs did appear." This author was a monk of Canterbury, who wrote in the time of Henry II.; and as he does not mention these representations as novelties, for he is describing all the common diversions of the time, we can hardly fix them later than the Conquest, which we believe is an earlier date than can be claimed for such entertainments by any of our continental neighbours. The first play of this kind specified by name is understood to have been called St. Catherine,* and, according to Matthew Paris, was written by Geofrey, a Norman, about the year 1110, and performed in the abbey at Dunstable. In Chaucer's time the miracle-plays were exhibited during the season of Lent, when a sequel of Scripture-histories was sometimes carried on for several days. At Skinner's Well, near Smithfield, in the reign of Henry IV., we read of a drama which lasted eight days, beginning with the creation of the world, and containing the greater part of the history of the Old and New Testament. This must have borne a close analogy to the well-known mystery entitled *Corpus Christi*, or *Ludus Coventriæ*, the Coventry play, transcripts of which, nearly if

* Quendam ludum de Sancta Katerina (quem miracula vulgariter appellamus), fecit.—Vitæ Abbat. p. 35, as cited by Strutt.

not altogether coeval with the time of its representation, are yet in existence. Three persons, speaking alternately, delivered the prologue to this curious play, which began with the creation of the universe, and ended with the last judgment.

Sometimes, however, the mysteries consisted of single subjects, and made but one performance. Strutt mentions two of these mystery-plays, which he discovered in the Bodleian library at Oxford; one on the conversion of St. Paul, the other the casting out of the devils from Mary Magdalene. Notwithstanding the seriousness of the subjects selected for these performances, and the sacred character of the building in which they were usually displayed, it seems clear that they were not exhibited without a portion of pantomimical fun, to make them palatable to the vulgar taste; and, indeed, the length and dulness of the speeches required some such assistance to enliven them, though they were in general much shorter than the modern plays. Beelzebub was the principal comic actor, assisted by his merry troop of under-devils, who with a variety of voices, strange gestures, and contortions of the body, excited the laughter of the populace. "It was a pretty part in the old church-plays," says Harsenet in his Declaration of Popish Impostures, 1603, "When the nimble Vice would skip up like a jackanapes into the Devil's neck, and ride the Devil a course; and belabour him with his wooden dagger till he made him roar; whereat the people would laugh to see the Devil so vice-haunted." Nor can there be any doubt that these profane mummeries were presented under the express direction of the clergy; for in the year 1378, the masters and scholars of Paul's school presented a petition to Richard II., praying him "to prohibit some unexpert people from presenting the history of the Old Testament, to the great prejudice of the said clergy, who have been at great expense in order to represent it publicly at Christmas." How long these mysteries continued to be exhibited cannot be exactly determined; but the whole period of their continuance may be termed the dead sleep of the muses, both here and abroad.

In Italy they prevailed long after the revival of literature; for the classic models were known to the learned only, and it was necessary to gratify the people with subjects adapted to their capacity. One would scarcely have believed that

when Tasso had written his Arminta, and furnished the noblest hints for tragedy in his Gierusalemme, the most ridiculous farces should still be exhibited at Milan; and that when Guarini had introduced a chorus of shepherds in his *Pastor Fido*, the people of Italy should still be fond of seeing the Seven Deadly Sins dance a saraband with the evil spirit.

Of the absurdities and ignorance displayed in these rude plays the reader, who may not have consulted them, can scarcely form a notion. In a mystery named *The Slaughter of the Innocents*,* the Hebrew soldiers swear by Mahound or Mahomet, who was not born till six hundred years after. Herod's messenger is named Watkin; and the knights are directed "to walk about the stage, while Mary and the Infant are conveyed into Egypt." Yet notwithstanding these egregious blunders and anachronisms, there is some kind of spirit in the character, and elevation in the language, of Herod, who thus announces himself:

> Above all kinges under the clouds christall
> Royally I reigne, in welthe withouten woe;

lines in which the reader will observe a specimen of the alliterative metre invented by the northern bards and so long a favourite ornament of our English poets.

One of the first improvements on the old mystery was the allegorical play or morality, so termed because the subjects consisted of moral reasoning in praise of virtue and condemnation of vice. The dialogues were carried on by such characters as Good Doctrine, Charity, Faith, Prudence, Discretion, Death, and the like, whose discourses were of a serious cast; while the province of making merriment for the spectators descended from the Devil in the mystery to the Vice or Iniquity of the morality, who usually personified some bad quality; and even when the regular tragedies and comedies were introduced, we may trace the descendants of this facetious personage in the clowns and fools by which they were so frequently disgraced. That this motley fool should be admitted into the finest tragedies of Shakspeare, only proves how indispensable it had been rendered

* Printed in Hawkins's Origin of the English Drama.

by the false taste of the age. Something of design, however, appeared in the moralities: there was a fable and a moral; a sprinkling also of poetry; but not unfrequently they were still devoted to purposes of religion, which was then the paramount object of attention. In the more early days of the Reformation it was so common for the partisans of the old doctrines (and perhaps also of the new) to defend and illustrate their tenets by dramatic representations, that in the 24th of Henry VIII., in an act of parliament made for the promoting of true religion, we find a clause restraining all rimors or players from singing in songs or playing in interludes any thing that should contradict the established doctrines. It was also customary at this time to act those moral and religious dramas in private houses for the edification and improvement as well as the diversion of well-disposed families; for which purpose the appearance of the *dramatis personæ* was so regulated, that five or six actors might represent twenty characters. A more particular knowledge of these performances, any further than as it serves to show the turn and genius of our ancestors and the progressive refinement of our language, is so little desirable, that the loss of the materials which might furnish fuller information is hardly to be regretted.

Even at the time when these mysteries and moralities were in vogue, there were secular plays and interludes acted by strolling companies, composed of minstrels, jugglers, tumblers, dancers, jesters, and similar performers, whose exhibitions were much relished, not only by the vulgar, but by the gentry and nobility. The courts of the kings of England and the castles of the barons were crowded with these itinerants, who were well received and handsomely rewarded, to the great annoyance of their clerical rivals, who endeavoured to bring them into disgrace, by inveighing against the filthiness and immorality of their performances, reproaches which seem to have been but too well merited. There existed then in Europe at the opening of the sixteenth century two distinct species of drama; the one formed upon the ancient classic model, and confined, like the sacred dialect of the Egyptian priests, to men of learning; the other merely popular, and of a Gothic original, but capable of great improvement, which now began to manifest itself. Being intended to divert as well

as instruct the populace, the moralities contained a good portion of drollery and humour, with some rude attempts at wit, which naturally led the way for comedy. The first dramatic piece deserving this name was *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, written in 1551, and said, in the old titlepages, to be "made by Mr. S——, master of arts, and played on the stage in Christ's College, in Cambridge."—There is a vein of familiar humour in this play, and a kind of grotesque imagery, not unlike some parts of Aristophanes, but without those graces of language and metre for which the Greek comedian was eminently distinguished. The prevailing turn for drollery was so strong, that in order to gratify it, even in the more serious and solemn scenes, it was still necessary to retain the Vice or Buffoon; who, like his contemporary, the privileged fool, was to enter the most august presence, and vent his humour without restraint. Shakspeare's clowns, as we have already intimated, were successors of the old Vice, and our modern Punch may be deemed a representative of the same personage in dumb show. We have a specimen of the former character in the old play of Cambyses, where Ambidexter, who is expressly called the Vice, enters with an old capcase for a helmet, and a skimmer for his sword, in order, as the author expresses it, "to make pastime."

After these moralities come what are termed interludes, which made some approaches to wit and humour. Many of them were written by John Heywood, jester to Henry VIII. Moralities, however, were still occasionally exhibited; one of them, entitled *The New Custom*, was printed so late as 1573. At length, after various modifications and improvements, they assumed the name of masks, which in the reign of Elizabeth and her successor became the favourite entertainments of the court.

Now might the dramatic muse be said to be fairly awake, for in the reign of Henry VIII. we appear to have had several writers of comedy. Richard Edwards, born in 1523, being both an excellent musician and a good poet, wrote two comedies, one called *Palemon and Arcyte*, in which we are told a cry of hounds in hunting was so well imitated that the audience were extremely delighted: the other was termed *Damon and Pythias*. Soon after comedy had appeared, tragedy began likewise to be revived, but it

was only among the more refined scholars that it at first retained any resemblance to the classic model. For the more popular audiences it was debased with an intermixture of low, gross humour, which long continued under the name of tragi-comedy. Our poets were mostly content to imitate the old mysteries, in giving only a tissue of interesting events, without any artful conduct of the fable, and without the least regard to the three great unities. These compositions they called histories, and they would probably have long continued the only specimens of our heroic drama, if a few persons of more refined taste had not introduced legitimate tragedy in the ancient form, intended at first for private and learned audiences at the inns of court, or the universities. It was for a grand Christmas solemnity at the Inner Temple, in 1561, that the tragedy of *Ferrex and Porrex* was composed by Thomas Sackville, afterward Lord Buckhurst, assisted by Thomas Norton. As a favourable specimen of this production we extract the lines in which Prince Ferrex imprecates curses on himself, if he ever meant ill to his brother Porrex.

> The wrekeful gods pour on my cursed hede
> Eternal plagues and never-dying wars!
> The hellish prince adjust my dampned ghoste
> To Tantal's thirst or proud Ixion's wheel,
> Or cruel gripe to gnawe my growing harte,
> To durynge tormentes and unquenched flames,
> If ever I conceived so frale a thought,
> To wish his end of life, or yet of reign.

This play, the first dramatic piece of any consideration in the English language, is not void of blemishes; but the language is in general dignified and perspicuous, some of the speeches are genuine specimens of English eloquence, and the account of Porrex's death is very much in the manner of the ancients. It was a model which our first dramatic writers would have done well to follow; but as they unfortunately aimed no higher than at present applause and profit, they were content to pander to the taste of a rude and ignorant audience, and the theatres continued to exhibit pieces much more in the Gothic form, than according to the chaste models of antiquity. How imperfect they were in all dramatic art appears from an excellent criticism of Sir Philip Sidney on the writers of this

period, who, however, instead of benefiting by his advice, endeavoured to render their pieces as attractive as possible, by adorning them with dumb shows, choruses, and other devices. In spite of all defects we had made a far better progress at this time than our neighbours the French; and were at least upon a footing with the other nations of Europe.

About the year 1589 *The Spanish Tragedy* was written by Kyd, and *Soliman and Persida* seems to have been composed by the same author. Though not entirely free from pedantry and affectation, a fine spirit runs through these productions, and the character of Basilisco is very well supported; and, if Kyd's play was acted before Shakspeare's Henry IV. (for they were both printed in the same year, 1599), it should seem to be the original of Falstaff. These tragedies are written in blank verse, intermixed with some passages in rhyme, where we sometimes find a smooth couplet not unworthy of Dryden, as—

> Where bloody furies shake their whips of steel,
> And poor Ixion turns an endless wheel.

About the close of the sixteenth century a sacred subject was again delivered in the dramatic form—the story of David and Absalom being wrought into a tragedy by George Peele, a very ingenious writer and a flowery poet. This piece abounds in luxuriant descriptions and fine imagery, the author's genius seeming to have been kindled by reading the Prophets and the Song of Solomon. He calls lightning by a metaphor worthy of Æschylus—"the spouse of thunder with bright and fiery wings:" nor is his description of David less worthy of admiration:

> Beauteous and bright he is, among the tribes—
> As when the sun, attir'd in glittering robes,
> Comes dancing from his oriental gate,
> And, bridegroomlike, hurls thro' the gloomy air
> His radiant beams.

There are many passages in this play of which Milton need not have been ashamed, and which, perhaps, he had read with pleasure, especially the prologue, which is the regular exordium of an epic poem.

Such was the state of the English theatre, when all at once the true drama received birth and perfection from the

creative genius of Shakspeare, Fletcher, Ben Jonson, and others, upon whose merits it is unnecessary to enlarge. The former, in particular, by the charms of his versification, the beauty of his speeches and descriptions, and the surprising vigour of his original and unassisted genius, exalted the English stage to so high a degree of perfection, that it rivals or surpasses the classic models of ancient Greece and Rome. But though he outshines all his contemporaries, he has not altogether extinguished them. Enough of their productions remains to prove that they constituted a very brilliant and wide-spread gallery of dramatic talent. "He overlooks and commands the admiration of posterity," says an admirable critic;* "but he does it from the *table-land* of the age in which he lived. He towers above his fellows 'in shape and gesture proudly eminent;' but he was one of a race of giants, the tallest, the strongest, the most graceful, and beautiful of them; but it was a common brood. If we allow, for argument's sake, that he was in himself equal to all his competitors put together, yet there was more dramatic excellence in that age than in the whole of the period that has elapsed since. If his contemporaries with their united strength would hardly make one Shakspeare, certain it is that all his successors would not make half a one. With the exception of a single writer, Otway, and of a single play of his (*Venice Preserved*), there is nobody in tragedy and dramatic poetry (I do not here speak of comedy) to be compared to the great men of the age of Shakspeare and immediately after. They are a mighty phalanx of kindred spirits, closing him round, moving in the same orbit, and impelled by the same causes in their whirling and eccentric career. The sweetness of Decker, the thought of Marston, the gravity of Chapman, the grace of Fletcher and his young-eyed wit, Jonson's learned sock, the flowing vein of Middleton, Heywood's ease, the pathos of Webster, and Marlow's deep designs, add a double lustre to the sweetness, thought, gravity, grace, wit, artless nature, copiousness, ease, pathos, and sublime conceptions of Shakspeare's muse. For such an extraordinary combination and developement of fancy and genius many causes may be assigned; and we may seek for the chief of

* The late Mr. Hazlitt, in his Lecture on Dramatic Literature, p. 8.

them in religion, in politics, in the circumstances of the time, the recent diffusion of letters—in local situation, and in the character of the men who adorned that period, and availed themselves so nobly of the advantages placed within their reach."

This was indeed a dramatic era, since the writers for the stage, numerous and fertile as they were beyond all precedent, seem to have been hardly able to supply the demands of a people who must have been almost universally devoted to the entertainments of the stage, if we are to judge by the number of playhouses then supported in London. From the year 1570 to the year 1629, no less than seventeen had been built; and as the theatres were so numerous, the companies of players were in proportion. Besides the children of the chapel, and of the revels, we are told that Queen Elizabeth established, in handsome salaries, twelve of the principal players of that time, who went under the name of her majesty's comedians and servants. Exclusively of these, many noblemen retained companies of players, who performed not only privately in their lords' houses, but publicly under their license and protection.

Abuse soon flowed from this universal and unrestricted indulgence in the pleasures of the stage. The great inns, being converted into temporary theatres, became the scenes of much scandalous ribaldry and shameless dissipation; of which Stow has left us a record in his *Survey of London*. Speaking of the stage he says, "This, which was once a recreation, and used therefore now and then occasionally, afterward, by abuse, became a trade and calling, and so remains to this day. In those former days ingenious tradesmen and gentlemen's servants would sometimes gather a company of themselves, and learn interludes, to expose vice, or to represent the noble actions of our ancestors. These they played at festivals, in private houses, at weddings, or other entertainments; but in process of time it became an occupation: and these plays being commonly acted on Sundays or festivals, the churches were forsaken, and the playhouses thronged. Great inns were used for this purpose, which had secret chambers and places, as well as open stages and galleries. Here maids and good citizens' children were inveigled and allured to private and unmeet contracts; here were publicly uttered popular

and seditious matters, unchaste, uncomely, and shameful speeches, and many other enormities. The consideration of these things occasioned, in 1574, Sir James Hawes being mayor, an act of common council, in which it was ordained, That no play should be openly acted within the liberty of the city, wherein should be uttered any words, examples, or doings of any unchastity, sedition, or such-like unfit and uncomely matter, under the penalty of five pounds, and fourteen days' imprisonment: that no play should be acted till first permitted and allowed by the lord mayor and court of aldermen; with many other restrictions. But these orders were not so well observed as they should be; the lewd matters of plays increased, and they were thought dangerous to religion, the state, honesty, and manners, and also for infection in the time of sickness: wherefore they were afterward for some time totally suppressed; but upon application to the queen and council, they were again tolerated, under the following restrictions: That no plays be acted on Sundays at all, nor on any holyday till after evening prayer; that no playing be in the dark, nor continue any such time but as any of the auditors may return to their dwellings before sunset, or, at least, before it be dark, &c. But all these proscriptions were not sufficient to keep them within due bounds, but their plays, so abusive oftentimes of virtue, or particular persons, gave great offence, and occasioned many disturbances, when they were now and then stopped and prohibited."

CHAPTER XXV.

English Drama, concluded.

"What's gone, and what's past help,
Should be past grief."——
"The players cannot keep counsel;—this fellow will tell all."
Shakspeare.

Soon after this period the stage recovered its credit, and rose to a higher pitch than ever. In 1603, the first year of King James's reign, a license was granted to Shakspeare and others, authorizing them to act plays, not only at their

usual house, the Globe, on the Bankside, but in any other part of the kingdom, during his majesty's pleasure. Now was the English theatre at the height of its glory and reputation. Dramatic authors of the first excellence and eminent actors equally abounded; every year produced a number of new plays; nay, so great was the passion for show or representation, that it was the fashion for the nobility to celebrate their weddings, birthdays, and other occasions of rejoicing, with masks and interludes, which were exhibited with surprising expense; the king, queen, and court frequently performing in those represented in the royal palaces, and all the nobility being actors in their own private houses.

This universal eagerness for theatrical productions continued during the whole reign of King James, and great part of Charles I., till puritanism, which had long opposed them as wicked and diabolical, at length obtained the upper hand, and finally effected a total suppression of all plays and playhouses. Their fate was thus decided on the 11th day of February, 1647, when an ordinance was issued, whereby all players, of every description, were declared to be rogues, and liable to be punished as such, by whipping and imprisonment; all the playhouses were directed to be pulled down and demolished; and a penalty of five shillings was imposed on every person who should be present at a dramatic entertainment. Of the several actors at that time employed in the theatres, the greater part went immediately into the army, and, as might be expected, took part with their sovereign, whose predilection for their profession had been shown in many instances previously to the open rupture between him and his people.

In the winter of 1648 the surviving dependants on the drama, urged by necessity, ventured again to act some plays at the Cockpit; but were soon interrupted by the soldiers, who took them into custody in the midst of one of their performances, and committed them to prison; after which ineffectual attempt, we hear no more of any public exhibition for some time. At particular festivals, however, they were allowed to divert the public at the Red Bull, and occasionally to entertain some of the nobility at their country-houses; but this was not always without interruption. A slender and precarious support was all that the unfortunate

actors could obtain; and many of them, in this emergency, drew forth and published the manuscript plays in their possession, which might not otherwise have ever seen the light.

Amid the gloom of fanaticism, and while the royal cause was considered desperate, Sir William Davenant, without molestation, exhibited entertainments of declamation and music, after the manner of the ancients, at Rutland-house; and in 1658 he removed to the Cockpit, in Drury-lane, where he performed until the eve of the Restoration. On the occurrence of this most fortunate event for the players, the king granted two patents, one to Sir William Davenant, who, before the civil wars broke out, had procured a patent from Charles I.; and the other to Thomas Killigrew, a person who had rendered himself acceptable to his sovereign as much by his vices, follies, and wit, as by his attachment to him in his distress. Davenant's actors were called the Duke's Company, and Killigrew's the King's Servants. Ten of the latter were placed on the royal household establishment, having each ten yards of scarlet cloth with a proper quantity of lace allowed them for liveries; and in their warrants from the lord chamberlain they were styled *gentlemen of the great chamber*. The renovated avidity of the public for stage performances sufficiently recompensed the expectations of managers, actors, and authors; but in 1665 the plague broke out in London with great violence; and in the succeeding year the fire which destroyed the metropolis suddenly arrested the progress of the drama.

After a discontinuance of eighteen months, both houses were again opened at Christmas, 1666, when the miseries occasioned by the plague and the fire were both forgotten, and public diversions were pursued with as much eagerness as ever. Till the Restoration, no woman had been seen upon the English stage; the female characters having always been performed by boys, or by young men of an effeminate aspect, which probably induced Shakspeare to make so few of his plays dependent upon them. The principal characters of his women are innocence and simplicity; such as Desdemona and Ophelia; and his specimen of fondness and virtue in Portia is very short. But the power of real and beautiful women was now added to the other attractions of the stage; and all the capital plays of Shakspeare,

Fletcher, and Ben Jonson were divided between the two companies, by their own alternate choice, and the approbation of the court. Both were at first successful, but after the novelty of the several performers had faded, and their stock of plays had become familiar, the Duke's Company felt their inferiority by the slender audiences they were able to attract. This consideration induced Sir William Davenant to try the effects of a more magnificent theatre, which he built in Dorset-gardens, and it was here that his successor first added spectacle and music to action, and introduced a novel species of plays called dramatic operas, set off with the most expensive decorations, and with the best voices and dancers. Of the progress of this species of entertainment, and the subsequent introduction of the Italian opera, we have already spoken in our twenty-first chapter, under the head Music.

In January, 1671–2, the playhouse in Drury-lane took fire, and was entirely demolished, together with fifty or sixty of the adjoining houses. After an interval of several years, the proprietors rebuilt it, employing for this purpose Sir Christopher Wren, the most celebrated architect of his time, whose plan was equally calculated for the advantage of the performers and the spectators. It was opened on the 26th of March, 1674, on which occasion a prologue and epilogue were delivered, both written by Dryden, in which the plainness and want of ornament in the house, as compared with that in Dorset-gardens, were attributed to the express directions of his majesty; who, it is well known, did not think the concerns of the stage beneath his notice. The Duke's Theatre, however, continued to be frequented, the victory of sound and show over sense and reason being as complete at this period as it has often been since; but the great expenses of this establishment diminished their gains to such a degree, that after a few years both parties imagined it would be more advantageous to unite their interests together, and open but one house.

This junction occurred in 1682; but though the patents were united, the profits to the proprietors and performers seem not to have been increased. At this period the play began at four o'clock, and we are told the ladies of fashion used to take the evening air in Hyde-park, after the representation. It was to this company, in the year 1690, that

old Cibber, after a probation of three-quarters of a year, was admitted as a performer in the lowest rank, at a salary of ten shillings a-week.

An association of the principal actors being entered into, with Betterton at the head of it, they procured a license from King William to act in a separate theatre, which they opened in Lincoln's-Inn-fields, on the 30th of April, 1695, with Congreve's new comedy of *Love for Love*, which had such extraordinary success, that scarcely any other play was acted there till the end of the season. So great at this period was the reputation of Congreve, that the company offered him a whole share upon condition he would give them a new play every year. This offer he accepted, and received the advantage, though he never fulfilled the condition; for it was three years before he produced *The Mourning Bride*, and three more before he gave them *The Way of the World*. After one or two years' success, the audiences began to decline, and it was again found that two rival theatres were more than the town was able to support. But while they were contending against each other with the most eager hostility, an enemy appeared, who, with considerable ability, and all the severity of rigid puritanism, attacked all the dramatic entertainments of the day, on account of their profaneness and immorality.

This was the celebrated Jeremy Collier, who in 1697 published a bitter invective against plays, performers, and dramatic writers, and, having some truth and justice on his side, won much of the public opinion in his favour, and imposed no small difficulty on those defenders of the stage who attempted to answer his charges. Among those champions were enlisted Congreve, Vanbrugh, Dryden, Dennis, and others, who opposed their assailant with sufficient wit and humour, but without confuting the objections he had started, either against themselves individually, or against the stage in general. Dryden found himself so hard pressed that, as Dr. Johnson notices in his life of him, "Like other hunted animals, he stood at bay, and when he could not disown the grossness of one of his plays, he declared that he knew not any law that prescribed morality to a comic poet." "The controversy," says Cibber, "had a very wholesome effect upon those who wrote after this time. They were now a great deal more upon their guard; inde-

cencies were no longer wit; and by degrees the fair sex came again to fill the boxes on the first day of a new comedy, without fear or censure." To forward the reformation of the stage, prosecutions were commenced against some of the performers for repeating profane and indecent words. Several were found guilty; and Betterton and Mrs. Bracegirdle were actually fined. From this period may be dated the introduction of that more refined taste which has done so much credit to the British theatre.

Sir John Vanbrugh, who had purchased Betterton's license and interest, built a new and magnificent playhouse in the Haymarket, and having associated himself with Mr. Congreve, opened it in April, 1705, with an Italian opera, which did not meet the success expected. With that happy facility which distinguished him in writing, Sir John immediately produced no less than four new pieces; which, however, did not bring the theatre into vogue, though they sufficed to establish the fact, that he was a better dramatist than architect. His comedies appeared under manifest disadvantage, the edifice being a vast triumphal piece of architecture, wholly unfit for every purpose of convenience; and the massive columns, gilded cornices, and lofty roof availed but little, when scarcely one word in ten could be heard. "The extraordinary and superfluous space," says Cibber, "occasioned such an undulation from the voice of every actor, that generally what they said sounded like the gabbling of so many people in the lofty aisles of a cathedral. The tone of a trumpet, or the swell of a singer's holding note, 'tis true, might be sweetened by it; but the articulate sounds of a speaking voice were drowned by the hollow reverberations of one word upon another." To these disadvantages might be added the situation, which was at that period much too remote for the usual frequenters of the theatre, a combination of circumstances which offered so little prospect of success, that at the end of a few months Mr. Congreve gave up his share, Sir John Vanbrugh followed his example, and several changes occurred, until a dispute among some of the proprietors occasioned the theatre to be shut up by an order of the lord chamberlain.

On the death of Queen Anne, in 1714, Sir Richard Steele procured her name to be inserted in the new patent of Drury-lane theatre, a connexion which lasted many years, to the

advantage of all the parties concerned. No sooner was the prohibition removed from the Haymarket, and dramatic performances again allowed at two theatres, than Mr. Rich, the manager of that in Lincoln's-Inn-fields, soon found himself unable to compete successfully with his rivals. In this emergency, betaking himself to a species of entertainment which has always been considered contemptible, and always encouraged, he introduced pantomimes upon the stage, supporting these exotic productions by the fertility of his invention and the excellence of his own performance in Harlequin. To the disgrace of public taste, he frequently obtained more money by these ridiculous and paltry performances, than all the sterling merit of the rival theatre was able to acquire.

The number of London playhouses was increased in 1729, by the addition of one in Goodman's-fields, which met with great opposition from several grave merchants and divines, by whose influence and representations the design was abandoned, and the building closed in the outset of a career that promised to be very successful. During the following six or seven years we find nothing in theatrical affairs worthy of particular record. Although the stage was not supported by any actors of transcendent merit, yet this period seems to be marked by a spirit of more than usual enterprise. The failure of the theatre in Goodman's-fields had not extinguished the expectations of another schemer, who solicited and obtained a subscription for building a magnificent playhouse in that part of the town, which, in spite of all opposition, was completed and opened in October, 1732, three years after which the proprietor quitted it, and removed to the old building in Lincoln's-Inn-fields.

While so many rival companies were thus contending for public favour, and none of them in a flourishing state, the imprudence and extravagance of a gentleman who possessed genius, wit, and humour in a high degree, obliged him to strike out a new species of entertainment, which in the end produced an extraordinary change in the dramatic system. With the supposed view of revenging some indignities which had been thrown upon him by people in power, the celebrated Henry Fielding determined to amuse the town at their expense; for which purpose he collected a company of performers, who exhibited at the theatre in the Haymarket,

under the whimsical title of the Great Mogul's Company of Comedians. The piece he represented was *Pasquin*, which was acted to crowded audiences for fifty following nights. His success, however, was only temporary; the company was disbanded, and the manager, who seldom attended to the voice of economy, was left no richer than when he began.

Galled by the severity of the satire in Fielding's pieces, the minister meditated a severe revenge on the stage, and in 1737 procured the Licensing Act to be passed, which forbade the representation of any performance not previously sanctioned by the lord chamberlain. It also took from the crown the power of licensing any more theatres, and inflicted heavy penalties on those who should contravene the regulations of the statute. Many pamphlets were published against the principle of this unpopular act, which was combated by the united force of wit, ridicule, and argument. It passed, however, into a law, and relieved the then existing and all future ministers from any apprehensions of similar annoyance on the part of dramatic writers.

No date can be deemed more remarkable in theatrical annals than the year 1741, when an actor appeared whose genius seemed intended to adorn, and whose abilities were destined to support, the stage. This was the celebrated Mr. Garrick, who, after experiencing some slights from the managers of Drury-lane and Covent-garden, determined to make trial of his theatrical qualifications at the playhouse in Goodman's-fields. The part he chose for his first appearance was that of Richard the Third, in which he displayed so clear a conception of the character, such power of execution, and a union of talents so varied and unexpected, that his reputation soon became fixed as the most perfect actor of his own or any time, and Goodman's-fields, which had only been frequented by the people of the city, became thronged with all ranks of visitants from every quarter of the town. At this theatre he remained but one season, when he removed to Drury-lane, where he not only continued to increase his professional reputation, but acquired a character for prudence and discretion which pointed him out as a proper person to succeed to the management of the theatre a few years after. From this period it began to flourish. Mr. Garrick's admirable performances

ensured full houses; while the industry and attention of his partner, Mr. Lacy, contributed to retain the public favour. By the advice of his physicians Mr. Garrick went abroad in 1763, in order to relax from the fatigues of his profession. After an absence of two seasons he returned to the stage, where he remained till 1776, and died in 1779, descending to the grave with the unfeigned concern of his numerous friends and connexions, and the universal admiration of the public, who felt how deeply he was entitled to their respect, not only for his incomparable talents, but for the decency and propriety which he had introduced into the dramatic performances.

In a summary of the stage, however brief, we cannot pass over Mr. Foote, who, having obtained a patent, rebuilt the theatre in the Haymarket, which was opened in May, 1767, and, by the assistance of his wit, personalities, mimicry, and combined talents as an author and an actor, proved eminently successful, and placed him in easy circumstances. Various considerations, however, induced him to transfer his interest to Mr. Colman, the first season of whose management (1777), introduced to a London audience three performers of great merit in their respective departments of the drama; we mean Miss Farren, afterward Countess of Derby, Mr. Henderson, and Mr. Edwin. In the following year Mr. Bannister, jun., first appeared at the same theatre as Dick, in *The Apprentice*. He was engaged the following season at Drury-lane as a tragedian, and was a pretty successful representative of Hamlet, Romeo, &c.; but the true bent of his genius being developed by the performance of Don Ferolo Whiskerandos in *The Critic*, he laid aside the buskin for the sock.

Not even the first appearance of our British Roscius forms a more notable epoch in the annals of the drama than the 12th of October, 1782, when Mrs. Siddons, from Bath, by far the most distinguished tragic actress of modern times, electrified the town by her performance of Isabella. Of this lady's surpassing requisites for the stage, both physical and mental, it is not our purpose to speak. To those who have seen her, description and eulogium are unnecessary; to those who have not, they would prove utterly inadequate to convey even a faint idea of her unrivalled merits. In the following year her brother, Mr. John Philip

Kemble, made his debut in Hamlet, of which he presented the most finished picture that had been exhibited since the days of Garrick. This period, indeed, was fertile in the production of eminent performers. Mr. John Johnstone appeared at Covent-garden in 1783, as the hero in the comic opera of *Lionel and Clarissa;* and, in 1785, Mrs. Jordan came out at Drury-lane in the *Country Girl.*

Mr. John Palmer, in June, 1787, opened a new playhouse, called the Royalty Theatre, near Wellclose-square, which had been built by subscription on a spacious and elegant scale, under the idea that the justices of the Tower Hamlets were empowered by the royalty of that fortress, to license the performance of plays; but it proved to be very different, for, after one night's performance, the theatre immediately closed, and the only entertainments subsequently allowed were burlettas, dances, and pantomimes, in the manner of those performed at Sadler's Wells and other minor theatres.

On the 17th of June, 1789, the King's theatre in the Haymarket was destroyed by fire; and in December of the following year Mr. Munden, from the Chester theatre, was engaged at Covent-garden, where he made his appearance in the very dissimilar parts of Sir Francis Gripe in *The Busy Body*, and Jemmy Jumps in *The Farmer.* At the same theatre, in the year 1791, Mr. Fawcett performed for the first time in the character of Caleb.

Mr. Harris, the proprietor of Covent-garden theatre, having expended 25,000*l.* on the extensive improvements in the building, and considerably enlarged his company, opened it in September, 1792, at advanced prices, requiring 6*s.* for the boxes, and 3*s.* 6*d.* for the pit; a demand which gave rise to the memorable and disgraceful disturbance vulgarly denominated the O. P. row. The proprietor had an indisputable right to offer his services to the public on terms proportionate to the capital he had embarked; and the result proved that his demand, so far from being exorbitant, was not even fairly remunerative. Many managers in former times had ruined themselves in ministering to the amusements of the town, and the public probably thought that so good and long-established a custom ought not to be abolished.

In 1793 the proprietors of the Drury-lane patent not

having been able to finish their new house at the customary time for commencing the season, nor being able to occupy the Pantheon in Oxford-street, which was consumed by fire on the 14th of January, 1792, resorted to the little theatre in the Haymarket, where a dreadful catastrophe occurred on the 3d of February, 1794. The play having been commanded by their majesties, the crowd was so great at the pit-door, that when it was opened a gentleman was thrown down the stairs, and the others who fell over him were trampled upon by those who continued still rushing in. The groans and screams of the dying and maimed were truly shocking, while those who were thus treading their fellow-creatures to death had it not in their power to recede, or avoid the mischief they were doing. Fifteen persons of both sexes were killed, and nearly twenty others, some of whom did not survive many days, suffered material injury in bruises and broken limbs.

The splendid new playhouse in Drury-lane, built by Mr. Holland, opened for theatrical performances on the 21st of April, 1794, on which occasion Mr. Charles Kemble first appeared before a London audience in the part of Malcom. From this time nothing material occurred in stage-history till the year 1796, when great curiosity was excited by a notice from Mr. Ireland, of Norfolk-street, Strand, that many original MSS. of Shakspeare had been discovered in an old trunk. Among these was the pretended play of *Vortigern*, which was represented at Drury-lane to a most crowded and respectable audience on the 2d of April, and deservedly condemned as a miserable imposition. In *An Authentic Account of the Shaksperian Manuscripts*, published soon afterward, Mr. Ireland avowed himself the author of the whole, and unblushingly seemed to glory in having succeeded to a certain extent in his endeavours to deceive the public, more particularly as the fabrication had received the sanction of many learned doctors, who maintained it to be genuine.

After the performance of Lady Teazle, in the School for Scandal, on the 8th of April, 1797, Miss Farren bade farewell to the stage, and soon afterward became Countess of Derby. On the 2d of August in the following year, Mr. John Palmer suddenly expired on the Liverpool stage while performing the part of *The Stranger*.

The year 1800 was rendered memorable by an attempt to assassinate King George III. at Drury-lane theatre, on the 15th of May. His majesty had commanded the performances of the night, and at the moment when he entered his box, a man in the pit, near the orchestra, suddenly stood up and discharged a pistol at the royal person. On hearing its report, his majesty, who had advanced about four steps from the door, stopped and stood firmly. The house was immediately in an uproar, and the cry of "*seize him!*" burst from every part of the theatre. The king, apparently not in the least disconcerted, came nearly to the front of the box, waving his hand to the queen to keep back, while he exclaimed, "Only a squib—a squib—they are firing squibs." After the intended assassin had been taken away, the queen came forward, and in great agitation courtesied to the audience, when she looked at the king and asked if they should stay. "We will not stir, but stay the entertainment out," replied the king. All the princesses, except Elizabeth, fainted away. As soon as the audience had ascertained that the culprit was in safe custody, their indignation gave way to loyal raptures at the escape of their revered sovereign. *God save the King*, being universally demanded, was sung by all the vocal performers, and *encored* amid the enthusiastic plaudits of the assemblage. The culprit, whose name was John Hatfield, was subsequently tried for high-treason, but acquitted as a lunatic, and ordered to be confined for life.

And here, with the termination of the century, we shall close our superficial retrospect of the stage,* not only because we wish to devote our brief remaining space to some playhouse notices of a more interesting nature, but because a continuance of these theatrical records to the present time would be little more than a recapitulation of dates with which the majority of our readers must be already conversant.

* Mostly compiled and abridged from Hawkin's Origin of the English Drama—Cibber's History of the Stage, continued by Victor—but more especially and more freely from the Introduction to the Biographia Dramatica, London, 1812.

CHAPTER XXVI.

*Playhouse Notices, chiefly allusive to the Elizabethan Era.**

"Support the stage,
Which so declines that shortly we may see,
Players and plays reduced to second infancy."
Dryden.

In the time of Shakspeare, who commenced as a dramatic writer in 1592, there were no less than ten theatres open; but most, if not all, of his plays were performed either at the Globe, in Bankside, or at the theatre in Blackfriars. Both belonged to the same company of comedians, viz. His Majesty's Servants; which title they assumed after a license had been granted to them by King James, in 1603, having before that period been called the Servants of the Lord Chamberlain.

Many of our ancient dramatic pieces were performed, as already stated, in the yards of carriers' inns, in which, at the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign, the comedians, who then first united themselves in companies, erected an occasional stage. The form of these temporary playhouses seems to be preserved in our modern theatres, the galleries in both being ranged over each other on three sides of the building. The small rooms under the lowest of these galleries answer to our present boxes; and it is observable that these, even in theatres which were subsequently built expressly for dramatic purposes, still retained their old name, and are frequently called rooms by our ancient writers. The yard bears a sufficient resemblance to the pits as at present in use. We may suppose the stage to have been raised on the fourth side of this area, with its back to the gateway of the inn, at which the money for admission was taken. Hence, in the middle of the Globe, and I suppose of the other public theatres of this period, there was an open yard or area, where the common people stood to see

* From Mr. Malone's supplement to his edition of Shakspeare.

the exhibition, from which circumstance they are called by Shakspeare groundlings, and by Ben Jonson 'the understanding gentlemen of the ground.'

"The galleries or scaffolds, as they are sometimes termed, and that part of the house which in private theatres was named the pit, seem to have been at the same price; and probably in the houses of reputation, such as the Globe, and that in Blackfriars, the price of admission into those parts of the theatre was 6*d.*, while in some meaner playhouses it was only 1*d.*, in others only 2*d.* The price of admission into the best rooms or boxes was, I believe, in Shakspeare's time, 1*s.*; though afterward it appears to have risen to 2*s.* and 2*s.* 6*d.*

"From several passages in our old plays, we learn that spectators were admitted on the stage, and that the critics and wits of the time usually sat there. Some were placed on the ground, others sat on stools, of which the price was either 6*d.* or 1*s.*, according, I suppose, to the commodiousness of the situation; and they were attended by pages, who furnished them with pipes and tobacco, which was smoked here as well as in other parts of the house. Yet it should seem that persons were suffered to sit on the stage only in the private playhouses, such as Blackfriars, &c., where the audience was more select and of a higher class; and that in the Globe and other public theatres no such license was permitted.

"The stage was strewed with rushes, which, as we learn from Hentzner and Caius de Ephemera, was in the time of Shakspeare the usual covering of floors in England. The curtain, which hangs in the front of the present stage, drawn up by lines and pulleys, though not a modern invention, for it was used by Inigo Jones, in the masks at court, was yet an apparatus to which the simple mechanism of our ancient theatres had not arrived, for in them the curtains opened in the middle, and were drawn backwards and forwards on an iron rod. In some playhouses they were woollen, in others made of silk. Towards the rear of the stage there appears to have been a balcony, the platform of which was probably eight or ten feet from the ground. From hence in many of our old plays, parts of the dialogue were spoken; and in the front of this balcony curtains likewise were hung.

A doubt has been entertained whether in our ancient theatres there were side and other scenes. It is certain that in the year 1605 Inigo Jones exhibited an entertainment at Oxford, in which moveable scenes were used; but he appears to have introduced several pieces of machinery in the masks at court, with which undoubtedly the public theatres were unacquainted. A passage which has been produced from one of the old comedies proves, it must be owned, that even these were furnished with some pieces of machinery, which were used when it was requisite to exhibit the descent of some god or saint; but from all the contemporary accounts, I am inclined to believe, that the mechanism of our ancient stage seldom went beyond a painted chair or a trap door, and that few, if any of them, had any moveable scenes. They were furnished with curtains, and a single scene composed of tapestry, which were sometimes, perhaps, ornamented with pictures; and some passages in our old dramas incline me to think that when tragedies were performed, the stage was hung with black. In the early parts at least of Shakspeare's acquaintance with the theatre, the want of scenery seems to have been supplied by the simple expedient of writing the names of the different places where the scene was laid in the progress of the play, which were disposed in such a manner as to be visible to the audience.*

"The stage was formerly lighted by small circular wooden frames, furnished with candles, eight of which were hung up, four at either side; and these continued to be used till they were removed by Mr. Garrick, who, on his return from France, first introduced the present commodious method of illuminating the stage by lights not visible to the audience. Many of the companies of players were formerly so thin, that one person played two or three parts; and a battle, on which the fate of an empire was supposed to depend, was decided by half a dozen com-

* The following humorous raillery of Sir Philip Sidney would lead us to infer that there were no scenes. "Now you shall see three ladies walke to gather flowers, and then we must believe the stage to be a garden. By-and-by we heare news of a shipwracke in the same place, then we are to blame if we accept it not for a rocke. Upon the back of that comes out a hideous monster with fire and smoke; then the miserable beholders are bound to take it for a cave; while in the meau time two armies fly in, represented with four swordes and two bucklers, and then what hard heart will not receive it for a pitched field?"

batants. It appears to have been a common practice in their mock engagements, to discharge small pieces of ordnance on the stage. Before the exhibition began three flourishes or pieces of music were played; or, in ancient language, there were three soundings. Music was likewise played between the acts; the instruments chiefly used being trumpets, cornets, and hautboys. The band, which did not consist of more than five or six performers, sat in an upper balcony, over what is now termed the stage-box.

"The person who spoke the prologue was ushered in by trumpets, and usually wore a long black velvet cloak, which I suppose was best suited to a supplicatory address. Of this custom, whatever might have been its origin, some traces remained till very lately; a black coat having been, if I mistake not, the constant stage habiliment of our modern prologue speakers. The dress of the ancient prologue speaker is still retained in the play exhibited in *Hamlet*, before the king and court of Denmark. The performers of male characters generally wore periwigs, which in the age of Shakspeare were not in common use. It appears from a passage in Puttenham's *Art of English Poesy*, 1589, that vizards were on some occasions used by the actors of those days; and it may be inferred from a scene in one of Shakspeare's comedies that they were sometimes worn by those who performed female characters; but this, I imagine, was very rare. Some of the female part of the audience likewise appeared in masks.

"The practice of exhibiting two dramas successively on the same evening does not appear to have been established before the time of the Restoration. But though the audiences were not gratified by the representation of more than one drama in the same day, the entertainment was diversified, and the populace diverted, by tumbling, sleight of hand, and morris-dancing, a mixture not much more heterogenous than that with which we are now frequently presented—a tragedy and a farce.

"The amusements of our ancestors before the commencement of the play were of various kinds: such as reading, playing at cards, drinking ale, or smoking tobacco. It was a common practice to carry table-books to the theatre; and either from curiosity or enmity to the author, or some other motive, to write down passages of the play; and

there is reason to believe that the imperfect and mutilated copies of some of Shakspeare's dramas, which are yet extant, were taken down in short-hand during the exhibition. At the end of the piece the actors in noblemen's houses and in taverns, where plays were frequently performed, prayed for the health and prosperity of their patrons; and in the public theatré for the king and queen. Hence probably, as Mr. Steevens has observed, the addition of *Vivant rex et regina* to the modern playbills.

"Plays began at one o'clock in the afternoon, and the exhibition was usually finished in two hours. Even in 1667 they commenced at three. When Gossen wrote his *School of Abuse*, in 1579, it seems the dramatic entertainments were usually exhibited on Sundays. Afterward they were performed on that and other days indiscriminately. The exhibition of plays on Sundays had not been abolished in the third year of king Charles I.

"The modes of conveyance to the theatre, anciently as at present, seem to have been various, some going in coaches, others on horseback, and many by water. To the Globe playhouse the company probably were conveyed by water; to that in Blackfriars the gentry went either in coaches or on horseback, and the common people on foot. In an epigram of Sir John Davis, the practice of riding to the theatre is ridiculed as a piece of affectation or vanity, and therefore we may presume that it was not general.

"Mr. Oldys, in one of his manuscripts, intimates that dramatic poets had anciently their benefits on the first day that a new play was represented; a regulation which would have been very favourable to some of the ephemeral productions of modern times. From Davenant we learn that in the latter part of the reign of Queen Elizabeth the poet had his benefit on the second day. It is certain that the giving authors the profit of the third exhibition of their play, which seems to have been the usual mode during almost the whole of the last century, was an established custom in the year 1612; for Decker, in the prologue to one of his comedies printed in that year, speaks of the poet's third day. The unfortunate Otway had no more than one benefit on the production of a new play, and this too he was sometimes obliged to mortgage before the piece was acted. Southern was the first dramatic writer who obtained the

emoluments arising from two representations; and to Farquhar, in the year 1700, the benefit of a third was granted. The customary price of a copy of a play in the time of Shakspeare seems to have been twenty nobles, or 6*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* The play, when printed, was sold for 6*d.*; and the usual present from a patrons, in return for a dedication, was 40*s.* On the first day of exhibiting a new play, the prices of admission appear to have been raised; and this seems to have been occasionally practised on the benefit nights of authors, to the end of the last century. No less than three plays of Ben Jonson were damned; and Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess*, and *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, written by him and Beaumont, underwent the same fate.

"It is not easy to ascertain what were the emoluments of a successful actor in the time of Shakspeare. They had not then annual benefits, as at present. The performers at each theatre seem to have shared the profits arising either from each day's exhibition, or from the whole season, among them. From Ben Jonson's *Poetaster* we learn that one—either of the performers or proprietors—had seven shares and a half, but of what integral sum is not mentioned. From the prices of admission into our ancient theatres, which have been already mentioned, I imagine the utmost that the sharers of the Globe playhouse could have received on any one day was about 35*l.* So lately as the year 1685, Shadwell received by his third day, on the representation of the *Squire of Alsatia*, 130*l.*; which Downes, the prompter, says was the greatest receipt that had ever been taken at Drury-lane playhouse at single prices. It appears from the MSS. of Lord Stanhope, treasurer of the chambers to King James I., that the customary fee paid to John Heminge and his company, for the performance of a play at court, was twenty nobles, or 6*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*; and Edward Alleyn mentions in his diary that he once had so slender an audience in his theatre called the *Fortune*, that the whole receipts of the house amounted to no more than 3*l.* and some odd shillings.

"Thus scanty and meager were the apparatus and accommodations of our ancient theatres, on which those dramas were first exhibited that have since engaged the attention of so many learned men, and delighted so many thousand spectators. Yet even then, we are told by a writer of that

age, 'that dramatic poesy was so lively expressed and represented on the public stage and theatres of this city, as Rome in the age of her pomp and glory never saw it better performed, in respect of the action and art, nor of the cost and sumptuousness.'"

We subjoin the following salaries of actors and prices of admission to our theatres in the year 1733, in order that the reader who is curious in such matters may compare them with those that prevailed at the time of Shakspeare, and the infinitely more liberal ones of modern days. In the year we have just mentioned, a difference having arisen between the managers and actors, most of the latter set up for themselves at the little theatre in the Haymarket. Upon this the managers published the following account of their salaries, to show the public how little room they had to mutiny:—"To Mr. Colley Cibber, from the time of letting his share till he left the stage, 12*l.* 12*s.* per week. Mr. Theophilus Cibber, 5*l.*, and his wife's whole salary till her death, without doing the company any service during the greatest part of the winter; and his own also during the time of his being ill, who performed but seldom after Christmas. Mr. Mills, jun., 3*l.*, under the same circumstances with regard to his wife. Mr. Mills, sen., 1*l.* per day for two hundred days certain, and a benefit clear of all charges. Mr. Johnston, 5*l.* Mr. Miller, 5*l.*, paid him eight weeks before he acted, besides a present of ten guineas. Mr. Harper, 4*l.*, and a present of ten guineas. Mr. Griffin, 4*l.* and a present. Mr. Shepard, 3*l.* Mr. Hallam, for himself and father, though the latter is of little or no service, 3*l.* Mrs. Heron, 5*l.* raised from 40*s.* last winter, yet refused to play several parts assigned her; and acted but seldom this season. Mrs. Butler, 3*l.* per week. By these and other salaries, with the incident charges (besides clothes and scenes), the patentees are at the daily charge of 49*l.* odd money each acting day."

Till about the same time the prices at the theatre were 4*s.* the boxes, 2*s.* 6*d.* the pit, 1*s.* 6*d.* the first gallery, and 1*s.* the second, except upon the first run of a new play or pantomime; when the boxes were 5*s.*, the pit 3*s.*, the first gallery 2*s.*, and the second 1*s.*; but Fleetwood thought fit to raise the prices for an old pantomime, which was revived without expense. This produced a riot for several nights,

and at last a number deputed by the pit had an interview with the manager in the green-room, where it was agreed that the advanced prices should be constantly paid at the doors, and that such persons as did not choose to stay the entertainment should have the advanced part of their money returned. This was a very advantageous agreement for the manager; because, when the audience had once paid their money and were seated, very few went out at the end of the play and demanded their advance; so that at last it settled in the quiet payment of the full and increased price. Thus matters remained until nearly our own times, when two further advances took place, and prices may be said to have reached their *maximum;* for it may be safely predicted that if any further alterations occur, the managers will find it more advantageous to reduce than augment the rates of admission to the theatre. The stage is a luxury which will not bear more than a certain degree of taxation; and as the government has recently found that the reduction of a high impost often increases the receipt, it may be well worth the while of our theatrical patentees to try the effect of a similar experiment. Their buildings are so large that they have but to fill them, even at reduced rates, in order to ensure an abundant remuneration.

Slight and superficial as our narrow limits have compelled us to make this retrospect of the drama, it is sufficient to warrant and confirm the few general observations with which we shall conclude our volume. First, it will be obvious that not at any period of our dramatic history, even when the stage was most eagerly and widely supported by the popular taste, does theatrical property appear to have been either pleasant or profitable to its possessors. Mr. Garrick and a few others who have made fortunes in this line, offer no confutation of our remark; they are the exceptions that confirm the rule. The former, too, was the first actor of his day, and it will be found that at almost every period, and more especially in modern times, the performer has been better remunerated than the proprietor. Even exclusive patents offer no security for success. We have seen these patentees leaguing together, and still failing to indemnify themselves. The precariousness of public favour, the necessity, from the overgrown size of the build-

ings, of gratifying the eye rather than the ear, and of thus plunging into the never-ending expenses of scenery, dresses, and decorations, the frequent destructions by fire, competition with rival theatres, and many minor drawbacks which we have not time to enumerate, seem to entail upon the unhappy proprietor inevitable vexation and annoyance, with very little contingent chance of adequate remuneration, and indeed with too great a probability of eventual ruin. Such, with few exceptions, having been the plight of theatrical property when the stage was more generally encouraged, it can hardly be much improved at the present juncture, when the people, although they have more money, have certainly less taste for theatrical representations than in former times.

We have seen the drama, in its first rude attempts, converting the Bible, then a sealed book, into visible action and English dialogue, degraded by the incongruous accompaniment of profane buffooneries, which would now scarcely be tolerated in the most vulgar booth at Bartholomew-fair. Even after the revival of literature, when the classic models of antiquity were well known in England, at least to the learned, they did not exercise the smallest influence upon our native drama, which, struggling slowly and painfully through the different phases of improvement, assumed successively the form of mysteries or miracles—moralities—interludes—masks, until the glorious reign of Elizabeth; when, under the influence of the Reformation, which aroused and called up the public mind from its cloistered slumbers, the genius of Great Britain burst forth at once and in all directions, but more especially in that of the drama, with an intellectual might, majesty, and effulgence which have never been paralleled in any age or country. What era can produce such a list of illustrious dramatists as Shakspeare, Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, Marlow, Webster, Decker, Marston, Chapman, Heywood, Middleton, and Rowley? These writers, as has been well observed, "had something in them that savoured of the soil upon which they grew: they were not French, they were not Dutch, or German, or Greek, or Latin; they were truly English. They did not look out of themselves to see what they should be; they sought for truth and nature, and found them in themselves. They were not the spoiled

children of affectation and refinement, but a bold, vigorous, independent race of thinkers, with prodigious strength and energy, with none but natural grace, and heartfelt, unobtrusive delicacy. The mind of their country was great in them, and it prevailed."*

Against this galaxy of dramatists it has been urged, as their greatest fault, that they degraded some of their finest tragedies by an admixture of comic characters, and even of gross buffoonery. The accusation is just, but the cause should be sought rather in the bad taste of the age than of the writers. No man, probably, knew better than Shakspeare himself, that the sister muses preside over distinct departments of the drama, which can never be intermixed without destroying the character of both. Tragedy, founded upon the principle of human sensibility, employs pathos for its means, and purposes as its object, to inspire a horror of great crimes, a love of the sublime virtues. Comedy has for its basis the malicious pleasure that all men feel in seeing others exposed to ridicule. We view the faults of our neighbours with a mingled complacency and contempt, when their foibles are not serious enough to excite compassion, nor so revolting as to inspire hatred, nor sufficiently dangerous to excite alarm. If their weaknesses are painted with delicacy, they make us smile; if they are presented to us in a striking, ludicrous, and unexpected light, they make us laugh. It would have been doubtless better could this inherent tendency to seize upon and enjoy whatever is ridiculous in others have been converted into a philosophical pity, but it has been found easier to make this malicious propensity serve as a corrective, and to smooth away the eccentricities and follies of one class by exposing them to the caustic ridicule of a second, just as we employ the sharp point of one diamond to polish another.

Though somewhat faded in the lapse of time, and eclipsed by the death of our noblest dramatists, who threw not the mantle of their inspiration on their immediate successors, the glories of the Elizabethan era were by no means extinguished, when the civil wars intervened, and the headlong torrent of puritanism swept away all that remained of taste and genius, and quenched the last spark of dramatic light

* Hazlitt's Lectures, p 2.

Nor did it recover either its lost splendour or its English character when the Restoration revived the stage; for French taste now prevailed in every thing, and our playwrights working upon a foreign model, instead of trusting to the energies of native talent, transplanted into England the artificial, monotonous, and declamatory style of their continental neighbours. Their imitations and translations gave us turgidity and rant for tragedy, indecency and ribaldry for comic wit. The one was mock heroics, the other real vulgarity, and both were out of place, and out of nature. Of this vicious manner, Dryden's comedies and tragedies offer the fullest illustration. His vigorous intellect could not fail to produce occasional passages of great splendour, but not sufficient to redeem his general character as a dramatist, which is that of bombast and bathos, feebleness and filth. For the next hundred years after his death we had no tragic writer of any marked eminence; and their art, with a few exceptions, continued to decline, until, in the growing distaste of the public for theatrical entertainments, and under the manifold discouragements to which writers for the stage were exposed, tragedy ceased to engage the attention of men of genius, and gradually sank into its present lamentable state, which may be almost called an extinction, so far as original productions are concerned.

We need not follow the fortunes of comedy, which, under the influence of similar causes, has experienced the same decay, throwing off, indeed, in its downward progress, all the impurities by which it had been defiled; but proving, at the same time, that it may be quite void of offence, without possessing a single point of attraction. Music, shows, farces, melodramas, and pantomimes have effectually pushed Thalia and Melpomene from their pedestals. Never was the English drama at so low, so deplorable an ebb, as it is at the present moment. Almost may it be said that we have no native modern drama; for the stage presents us little of novelty but successive adaptations from the French. It is no longer a public mirror, which, by reflecting back to us correct images of ourselves, and of the times in which we live, may assist us to amend the defects of both; but a magic lantern, offering to our view an unmeaning jumble of foreign frivolities, grotesque monsters, and fantastic fooleries. Into the causes of this deplorable perversion it

is not our province to enter; but when we say that we deeply regret it, we do but express the sentiments of all those who are jealous of our reputation for literature and good taste, and who feel that a well-regulated theatre, where all classes, from the king to the cobbler, may meet together to share the same intellectual feast, to read the same moral lesson, to be similarly and simultaneously affected by the sympathies of our common nature, must, in its civilizing and exalting effects upon the community, conduce equally to the important purposes of general amusement and of public instruction.

APPENDIX.

BY SAMUEL WOODWORTH, ESQ.

AMERICAN FESTIVALS, GAMES, AND AMUSEMENTS.

INTRODUCTION.

The author of the foregoing pages, having confined his researches and descriptions to the Eastern hemisphere, has left a very interesting work somewhat imperfect and incomplete, as regards an American reader. To supply this omission, at the request of the publishers of the "Family Library," some pains have been taken to procure information on the subject of such festivals, games, and amusements as are peculiar to the citizens of the United States and the *aborigines* of the American continent.

It will be readily conceived, however, that these must, of necessity, be very limited in number and variety; for though the talent of *invention* is an acknowledged characteristic of our countrymen, it is generally exercised on subjects of practical or imagined *utility*, and seldom, if ever, in multiplying their sources of *amusement*. As colonists of different European nations, the early settlers of America were content to walk in the footsteps of their ancestors; and those whose professional pursuits or system of moral discipline admitted of any species of secular recreations very naturally adopted such as were practised in the land of their forefathers.

From the *aborigines* or primitive inhabitants of this western world we have condescended to borrow little or nothing on the score of amusement. Their religious and political festivals, however, their war-dances, games, &c. are not only interesting in themselves, but very properly claim the

first place in an essay devoted to American customs, habits, and manners. We shall therefore proceed to give such an account of them as our prescribed limits will permit; with an assurance to the reader that the facts here stated have been derived from authentic sources.

CHAPTER I.

Festivals, Games, and Amusements of the American Indians.

> Lo, the poor Indian! whose untutored mind
> Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind;
> His soul, proud science never taught to stray
> Far as the solar walk, or milky-way;
> Yet simple nature to his hope has given,
> Behind the cloud-topp'd hill, an humbler heaven.—POPE.

DR. BOUDINOT, who, in his ingenious work entitled "*A Star in the West*," has advanced some plausible reasons in support of his theory that the *aborigines* of America were the lineal descendants of the "*long-lost tribes of Israel*,"* has collected and imbodied many interesting facts illustrative of the subject before us. He informs us, on authorities that cannot be disputed, that the Indians, generally, carefully observe five religious festivals, viz:—

1. Their Feast of First-fruits; and after it, on the evening of the same day, a feast resembling the Jewish Passover.
2. The Hunter's Feast; resembling the Hebrew Pentecost.
3. The Feast of Harvest and Day of Expiation of Sin.
4. A daily Sacrifice.
5. A Feast of Love.

Independent of these five general festivals, there are a number of *local* and *occasional* feasts, peculiar to the different tribes, of which we are unable to furnish any particular description. Respecting those named above, however, most travellers are agreed in confirming the following facts:—

1. FEAST OF FIRST-FRUITS.—Both William Penn and

* See 2d Esdras, chap. xiii. v. 39–50

Mr. Adair have described this festival in terms that forcibly remind us of the ancient Hebrews, whose *first-fruits* were always consecrated to the Lord. Penn attended several of these feasts, and speaks of them from his own observation. "The first and fattest buck they kill," says he, "goeth to the fire, where he is all burned, with a doleful ditty of him who performs the ceremony; but with such marvellous fervency and labour of body, that he will even sweat to a foam." The dances which succeed, are performed "with equal earnestness and labour, but with great appearance of joy. In the fall, when the corn cometh in, they begin to feast one another. Their entertainment," adds the benevolent writer, who was a guest, "was at a great seat by a spring under some shady trees.* It consisted of *twenty bucks*, with hot cakes made of *new corn*, with both wheat and beans, which they make up in a square form, in the leaves of the corn, and then bake them in the ashes. They then fall to dancing," &c.

Mr. Adair says, "On the day appointed (as soon as their first spring produce comes in), while the sanctified new fruits are dressing, six old 'beloved women'† come to their temples (or sacred wigwams of worship), and dance the 'beloved dance,' with joyful hearts. They observe a solemn procession as they enter the *holy ground*, or 'beloved square,' carrying in one hand a bundle of small branches of various green trees; when they are joined by the same number of 'beloved old men,' who carry a cane in one hand, adorned with white feathers, having green boughs in the other hand. Their heads are dressed with white plumes, and their women in their finest clothes, and anointed with bear's grease or oil; having, also, small tortoise-shells and white pebbles fastened to a piece of white dressed deer-skin, which is tied to each of their legs.

"The eldest of the 'beloved men' leads the sacred dance at the head of the innermost row, which of course is next the *holy fire*. He begins the dance, after once going round the holy fire, in solemn and religious silence. He then, in the next circle, invokes *yah*, after their usual manner, on a

* See *Barbecues* in the Southern States.

† The term *beloved*, in their language, means *sacred* or *consecrated* to religious purposes.

bass key, and with a short accent. In another circle he sings *ho, ho;* which is repeated by all the religious procession, till they finish that circle. Then, in another round, they repeat *he, he,* in like manner, in regular notes, and keeping time in the dance. Another circle is continued in like manner, with repeating the word *wah, wah;* making, in the whole, the divine and holy name of '*Yah-ho-he-wah*' [or *Jehovah*]. A little after this is finished, which takes a considerable time, they begin again, going fresh rounds, singing *hal, hal—le, le—lu, lu—yah, yah,* in like manner; and frequently the whole train strike up '*hallelu, hallelu! halleluyah! halleluyah!* with great earnestness, fervour, and joy; while each strikes the ground, with right and left foot alternately, very quick, but well timed. Then a kind of hollow-sounding drum joins the sacred choir, which excites the old female singers to chant forth their grateful hymns and praises to the Divine Spirit, and to redouble their quick, joyful steps, in imitation of the leader of the 'beloved men,' at their head.

"At the end of this notable religious dance, the old 'beloved women' return home, to hasten the *feast* of the new sanctified fruits. In the mean time, every one at the temple drinks plentifully of the *cussend*, and other bitter liquids, to cleanse their sinful bodies, as they suppose. After which, they go to some convenient deep water, and there, according to the ceremonial law of the Hebrews, they wash away their sins with water. They then return with great joy, in solemn procession, singing their notes of praise, till they again enter the *holy ground*, to eat of the new delicious fruits, which are brought to the outside of the square by the old 'beloved women.' They all behave so modestly, and are possessed of such an extraordinary constancy and equanimity in pursuit of their religious mysteries, that they do not show the least outward emotions of pleasure at the first sight of the sanctified new fruits.

"On the evening of the same day they have another public feast, besides that of the *first-fruits*, which looks somewhat like the Passover; when a great quantity of venison is provided, with other things, dressed in the usual way, and distributed to all the guests; of which they eat freely that evening: but that which is left is thrown into the fire and burned, as none of it must remain till sun-

rise on the next day, nor must a bone of the venison be broken."*

2. The Hunter' Feast; otherwise called the "Feast of Weeks," similar to the Hebrew Pentecost. Dr. Beatty says that once in the year, some of the tribes of Indians beyond the Ohio choose from among themselves *twelve* men, who go out and provide *twelve* deer; and each of them cuts a small sapling, from which they strip the bark, to make a tent, by sticking one end into the ground, bending the tops over one another, and covering the poles with blankets. Then the *twelve* men choose each of them a stone, which they make hot in the fire, and place them together after the manner of an altar, within the tent, and then burn the fat of the insides of the deer thereon. At the time they are making this offering the men within cry to the Indians without, who attend as worshippers, "We pray or praise." They without answer, "We hear." Then those in the tent cry, "*Ho-hah!*" very loud and long, which appeared to be something in sound like *halle-lujah!* After the fat was thus offered, some tribes burned tobacco, cut fine, upon the same stones, supposed in imitation of incense. Other tribes choose only *ten* men, who provide but *ten* deer, *ten* saplings or poles, and *ten* stones.†

3. Feast of Harvest. The most solemn and important *feast* and *fast* observed by the Indians *is one* which strikingly corresponds with the Jewish *Feast of Harvest and Day of Expiation of Sin*. This grand annual festival was formerly kept at the beginning of the first new moon in which the Indian corn became full-eared, as we learn from Adair. But for many years past the time of celebration has been regulated by the season of harvest.

According to Charlevoix, the harvest among the *Natchez*, on the Mississippi, is in common. The great chief fixes the day for the beginning of the festival of the harvest, which lasts three days, spent in sports and feasting. Each private person contributes something of his hunting, his fishing, and his other provisions; as, maize, beans, and melons. The great chief presides at the feast—all the sachems are round him in a respectful posture.

The fathers of families never fail to bring to the temple

* See "*A Star in the West*," p. 207. † Ibid. p. 212.

the first produce of the harvest, and of every thing that they gather; and they do the same by all the presents that are made to their nation. They expose them at the door of the temple; the keeper of which, after presenting them to the Spirit, carries them to the king, who distributes them to whom he pleases. The seeds are in like manner offered before the temple, with great ceremony. But the offerings which are made of bread and flour every new moon are for the use of the keepers of the temple.

As the offerings of the fruits of the harvest precede a long strict *fast* of two nights and a day, they gormandize such a prodigious quantity of strong food, as to enable them to keep inviolate the succeeding fast. The *feast* lasts only from morning to sunset.

When a town celebrates the *busk*, or first fall fruits, having previously provided themselves with new clothes, new pots, pans, and other household utensils and furniture, they collect all their worn-out clothes and other despicable things, sweep and clean their houses, squares, and the whole town of their filth; which, with all the remaining grain, and other old provisions, they cast together in one common heap, and consume it with fire. After taking medicine, and *fasting* for three days, all the fire in the town is extinguished. During this fast they abstain from the gratification of every appetite and passion whatever. A general amnesty is proclaimed. All malefactors may return to their town, and they are absolved from their crimes, which are now forgotten, and they are restored to favour. On the fourth morning, the high-priest, or chief "beloved man," by rubbing dry wood together, produces *new fire* in the public square, from whence every habitation in the town is supplied with the *new* and *pure* flame. Then the women go forth to the harvest-fields, and bring from thence *new* corn and fruits; which, being prepared in the best manner, in various dishes, and drink withal, is brought with solemnity to the square, where the people are assembled, apparelled in their new clothes and decorations. The men having regaled themselves, the remainder is carried off, and distributed among the families of the town. The women and children solace themselves in their separate families, and in the evening repair to the public square, where they *dance, sing, and rejoice* during the whole night, observing a

proper and exemplary decorum. This continues three days; and the four following days they receive visits, and rejoice with their friends from neighbouring towns, who have also purified and prepared themselves.*

4. Feast of the daily Sacrifice.—The Hebrews, it is well known, offered daily sacrifices of a lamb, every morning and evening; and, except the skin and entrails, it was burnt to ashes. The Indians have a very humble imitation of this rite. The women always throw a small piece of the fattest of the meat into the fire, before they begin to eat. At times they view it with pleased attention, and pretend to draw omens from it. This they will do, though they are quite alone, and not seen by any one.†

5. Feast of Love.—Every spring season one town or more of the Mississippi Floridians keep a solemn *feast of love*, to renew their old friendships. They assemble three nights before the feast, and on the fourth they eat together. During the intermediate space, the young men and women dance in circles from the evening till the morning.

War-Dances, &c.—Indian war-dances have been so frequently exhibited on the stage, and in other public places, by chiefs and warriors who have visited our populous cities, that a description in this place is deemed unnecessary. Their object appears to be twofold: *martial* and *religious*—to *drill* the young warriors in the *exercise* of their weapons, and, at the same time, to invoke the aid of the Great Spirit in the impending conflict. They resemble the military dances of the Greeks, described in the former part of this work, p. 196.

Indian Games, &c.—It has been observed (says Mr. Sandford),‡ that nations preserve no part of their economy with so much exactness as their *games*, *sports*, and *amusements*. Being daily repeated, they can seldom be forgotten; and as they are chiefly confined to the young, they have the best chance of making a permanent impression. Indian *games*, however, are not numerous, and seem chiefly designed to render the combatants athletic and swift of

* The Natchez are now extinct. See Dr. Boudinot's "*Star in the West*," pages 216 and 225.

† Ibid, page 227.

‡ Sandford's History of the United States.

foot. Some of the western tribes formerly had a play, which, for want of the appropriate name, we must call a *scramble*. A billet of wood, about eighteen inches long, made round, and polished very smooth, was thrown to a great distance by one of the chiefs. The younger lads of the tribe immediately started in pursuit of it. The fleetest *runner* was not always the stoutest *wrestler;* to *get* the billet was some merit; but to *keep* it was a greater; and it was so slippery, that it changed hands perhaps a thousand times before the strongest proclaimed his victory.*

But the most universal and most manly game, is that of *ball*.† This is frequently played by several hundreds; and different tribes will sometimes play against each other. The ball is made of deer-skin, stuffed with hair, and sewed with sinews. The sticks are from three to four feet long; and, being curved at the end, a web is made of thongs, for the purpose of catching the ball. The *goals* are two stakes, set in the ground, about six hundred yards apart. The ball is tossed into the air, at an equal distance from each; and the object is to throw it beyond the one or the other. The parties enter upon the combat with great eagerness; the velocity of their movements is scarcely credible; the ball seldom touches the ground, but is seen constantly shooting into the air; and, while one is upon the point of hurling it in *one* direction, an antagonist strikes down his club, catches the ball in his web, and sends it to *another*. "They play with so much vehemence," says a traveller, "that they frequently wound each other, and sometimes a bone is broken. But, notwithstanding these accidents, there never appears to be any spite, or wanton exertions of strength to affect them; nor do disputes ever happen between the parties."‡

* Jovtel's Journal Historique du dernier Voyage, &c.
† Sandford's United States, p. clxxxii.
‡ Carver, p. 365

CHAPTER II.

Festivals, Games, and Amusements in New-England.

> Not so the Yankee—his abundant feast,
> With simples furnished, and with plainness dressed
> A numerous offspring gathers round his board,
> And cheers alike the servant and the lord;
> Whose well-bought hunger prompts the joyous taste,
> And health attends them from the sweet repast.—BARLOW

THE first settlers of the "New World," as America was then called, had but little time, and perhaps still less inclination, to indulge in pastimes and recreations. The almost incessant labours, dangers, and privations incidental to a state of colonial infancy, on the borders of an unexplored wilderness, tenanted by hostile savages, furnished sufficient occupation for the minds and bodies of the European emigrants. Indeed, the rigid moral discipline and peculiar religious tenets of the puritans of New-England were, in many respects, incompatible with such games and amusements as prevailed in the mother country; while the religious festivals, retained by some of the reformed churches, were held in abhorrence, as impious abominations but little inferior in atrocity to those of the papal hierarchy!

It is well known that the colony of Plymouth, which commenced in the year 1620, was planted "principally for the sake of the unmolested enjoyment of the institutions of religion. They wished also to make an experiment of a civil commonwealth, to be regulated and governed on the principles of the sacred Scriptures."*

Among the early penal enactments of this colony was one said to be framed in the following extraordinary phraseology: "No one shall keep *Christmas*, or any saint-day, read common-prayer, make mince-pies, dance, play cards, or play on any instrument of music, except the drum, trumpet, and Jews'-harp." The observance of *Christmas*

* Tytler's History.

in particular, was so much in opposition to their ideas of religious propriety, that they rather encouraged its *desecration* by the youth of the colony; and hence originated the custom, still prevalent in many parts of the country (but which is more honoured in the breach than in the observance), of selecting that day for a trial of skill in shooting at tame turkeys, geese, &c. "set up" for the purpose, and throwing clubs at cocks and other domestic fowl.* In this instance, as in many others, the spirit of bigotry overshot its mark, and actually created a secular holiday, in opposing a religious festival.

This opposition to the *feast* days of the church of England was further manifested by the frequent and rigid observance of days especially set apart by themselves for *fasting*, abstinence, and "the mortification of the flesh." In prosperity or adversity, peace or war, victory or defeat, plenty or famine, whether the colony was blessed with health or wasted by pestilence, it was all the same; a general *fast* was their favourite mode of expressing thanks as well as contrition. "A day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer" was appointed "by authority," on which "all servile labour and recreation, inconsistent with the solemnity of said day," were strictly forbidden, and all "creature comforts" prohibited by law. This was a "dark age" in the annals of the eastern colonies, and the glorious invention of a "*New-England Thanksgiving*" was reserved for another generation. Of the *inventors* of this celebrated festival nothing is now known; but could the felicitous idea be traced to an individual, his name should live in marble and brass, and his fame be perpetuated in poetry and song!†

A "New-England Thanksgiving" (and south of Connecticut such holydays hardly deserve the name) is dear to the heart of every son and daughter of that favoured region. It is sweet in the anticipation, in the enjoyment,

* See "Shrove-Tuesday," page 118 of this volume.

† It is worthy of remark, that the first settlers of New-England, who were endeavouring to establish a civil commonwealth on the principles of the Jewish theocracy, should have deviated from their model in one very important particular, viz. in rejecting *festivals*, and observing frequent *fasts*; whereas the Jews kept *thirty holydays* every year, and only *one* fast! See the 23d and 24th pages of this work; also page 27

and in the remembrance. Infancy, youth, and old age,—all ranks, degrees, sexes, and complexions are rendered happy by its annual return; and all unite in the heart, if not with the voice, in thus shouting its welcome:

> Hail, the season of joy and festivity,
> Social pleasures and innocent mirth,
> Which smooths the path of age's declivity,
> And gives to infancy Eden on earth.
> When Plenty her treasure bestows without measure,
> And innocent Pleasure pursues her career;
> While Love's soft wishes still sweeten our dishes,
> And heighten the blisses of *thanksgiving* cheer.
> *Pastoral Melodies.*

It is justly observed, in a former part of this work, that "the earliest festivals of the Greeks, and indeed of all nations, were kept in the *autumn*, after gathering in the fruits of the earth, when gratitude prompted them to offer up sacrifices to heaven, and social festivities were the natural consequence of plenty." In another place our author says, "The Saxons had the same custom, always setting aside a week, after harvest, for holydays; and our festive '*harvest-home*' [in England] is but a continuation of the ancient practice."

In all ages and countries these annual festivities have ever been attended with some religious rites, plainly showing that their origin was gratitude to heaven. This is also the case as regards the New-England festival popularly denominated "*thanksgiving*." This joyous anniversary (which was doubtless first instituted in the Eastern colonies as a substitute for Christmas) takes place late in autumn, after the fruits of the earth are gathered in, and the labours of the husbandman have been rewarded by the fruition of harvest. The first or second Thursday in December is generally appointed for this purpose by the governor of the state, who issues a proclamation to that effect; a printed copy of which is sent to every clergyman in the state. On the first Sabbath after its reception, at the conclusion of the sermon, this proclamation is read from the pulpit; and in some parishes, on each succeeding Sabbath until the time appointed.

When the happy day arrives, the people assemble in their respective places of worship, dressed in their best

attire. Here they listen to an appropriate sermon, and join in prayer, hymns, and anthems expressly adapted to the occasion. These services generally occupy about two hours, and then are over for the day; the remainder of which is devoted to feasting, sports, games, and amusements of various descriptions.

The "*thanksgiving dinner*," however, forms a prominent feature of the picture. Every farmer's table now literally "groans with the weight of the feast." Flesh and fowl of his own raising and fattening—fish and game from his own streams and woodlands—vegetables of his own planting—butter, milk, and cheese, the product of his own dairy, are now found in luxuriant profusion upon his hospitable table; while the delicious "*pumpkin pie*" leads a host of other dainties in the bountiful dessert. Clear sparkling cider, mead, perry, and spruce beer, all and each the product of the homestead, lend their exhilarating influence; and if ever a set of joyous hearts and smiling faces assembled together in social harmony,—if genuine happiness is ever experienced at the festal board, it is on such occasions. Apprentices in the metropolis, who are only permitted to visit their parental and rural homes once or twice in the year, are now sure to be present; and a hoary-headed patriarch often presides at these domestic banquets, where the guests comprise two or three generations of his own descendants. It is a jubilee that draws together members of the same family who have been long separated; and as a ball invariably succeeds the festivities of the day, there is no small excitement among the village lasses.

In the cities and populous towns of New-England this festival is not observed with the same strictness, nor enjoyed with the same zest, that distinguishes it in country villages. It is true, that the churches of every denomination are opened, and appropriate services performed; but these are followed by no extraordinary festivities or rejoicings. This circumstance is probably owing to the modern introduction of other holydays, particularly that of *Christmas*, which is now kept, with more or less devotion, by Christians of every denomination; and will be more particularly noticed among the holydays of New-York.

New-Year's Day in NewEngland, as in most other parts of the world, is devoted to the cordial interchange of friendly

wishes, and the usual "compliments of the season." Printed poetical addresses, written expressly for the occasion, are presented to the citizens (who seldom grudge the *quid pro quo*), not only by the carriers of newspapers and other periodicals, but also, in some places, by the watchmen, lamplighters, bakers, milkmen, &c. &c.

MAY-DAY.—Although, in New-England, May seldom makes her *entrée* arrayed in those enchanting smiles and blushes with which she charms the inhabitants of more southern regions, she is still greeted with a hearty welcome by the lovers of green trees, tender grass, and other *symptoms* of sylvan beauties, which are yet in embryo. Hundreds of the refined citizens of Boston, whose evening pleasures or morning dreams deprive them for twelve months of the glorious spectacle of a rising sun, are religiously scrupulous to witness that phenomenon on the *first of May*. Pedaneous excursions are planned, and parties made up, on the previous evening; and wo betide the lover who is so deficient in gallantry as to oversleep the hour, while his wakeful mistress is anxiously waiting to hear his signal-tap at her window.

The first dawn of day (if it break serenely) is generally the appointed time for commencing these rural perambulations:

> "Then, arm in arm, the pairs depart,
> With agile feet, and lightsome heart."

Their walks generally extend two or three miles into the country, in such directions as whim or fancy may dictate. Some cross the different bridges which connect the peninsula with Cambridge, Charlestown, and Dorchester; others stroll out to Roxbury and Brookline; while many content themselves with sauntering over the Common, and plucking green boughs from the trees in the Mall. The ostensible object, with all, is to inhale the morning air, behold the rising sun, and collect *May-greens* and *flowers*,—that is, if any of the latter can be found in bloom. Every one is ambitious of carrying home a large *quantity* of such rural spoils, as so many trophies of a victory obtained over indolence or timidity; and they certainly form no despicable ornament for the vacant fireplace, or the mantel above it. To bear an active part in the ceremony above described is

termed "*to go a Maying*;" a laudable custom, which has been handed down by our ancestors, and celebrated by one of their descendants, in the following lines:—

> "The night in which pale April yields to May,
> How few enjoy repose! The country lass,
> Intent upon the morning walk, with him
> Who holds her gentle heart, on various plans
> In hopeful cogitations, spends the night—
> What hat or riband will become her best—
> What most will tend to make herself outvie
> The blushing fragrant month they rise to hail.
> O, by my soul! this '*Maying*' has delights
> Which I shall ne'er forget, 'while memory holds
> Her seat' within my brain. In youth's fair dawn,
> I forward look'd to this delightful hour
> With feelings—feelings none can paint; for then,
> Some gentle, artless, unaffected nymph
> Was sure to be the partner of my walk,
> Accept my nosegays (sweetened by her breath),
> And, without chiding, let me steal a kiss
> From lips more fragrant than the flower she held."
>
> *Quarter Day.*

For a description of "*Maying*" in Old England the reader is referred to page 125 of this work.

Militia Trainings, with their attendant sports and amusements, are familiar to every reader, and hardly require a description. The sooner they are done away with, in our opinion, the better will it be for the moral as well as the military character of our country. This remark is not intended to apply to the splendid martial pageants of our principal cities, composed of volunteer *corps*, whose dress and discipline render them an honour and an ornament to their country. See *Target-shooting*, in New-York.

Election Day, as it is improperly denominated, is an anniversary of some importance in the metropolis of Massachusetts, and at the seat of government in each of the New-England States. It is not the day, however, on which the elective franchise is exercised by the citizens, but that on which the governor-elect and other successful candidates are installed in office. In Boston, this event is celebrated annually on the last Wednesday of May, on which occasion the city is filled with strangers from the country, who flock into town from all quarters to witness the military parade, and other shows and spectacles connected with the ceremonies of the day. The Common and Mall are sur-

rounded with tents and booths for the vending of refreshments,* and every place of public amusement holds out unusual attractions to the excited multitude.

Another holyday of equal festivity, and, in some respects of superior splendour, follows hard upon the heels of the one just alluded to. This is called "*Artillery Election*," it being the anniversary of the organization of a military corps, called the "*Ancient and Honourable Artillery*," instituted in the year 1638. This celebration occurs on the first Monday in June, when the newly elected officers receive their commissions and assume their stations. Both these festivals, it is believed, are attended with some appropriate religious exercises. Our reminiscences, however, are of more than twenty years' standing; and customs, like fashions, are prone to change.

In Connecticut, the holyday of *Election* is annually observed with like ceremonies and similar hilarity. On the day previous, the military companies at the seat of government are ordered out to meet the governor-elect, and escort him into town. On the following day they again parade, and take the lead of the civic procession, which moves in the following order, viz. the military; sheriffs; governor secretary and treasurer; chaplain; senators; speaker and clerks; representatives; clergy; citizens. The procession thus formed proceeds to the church, where a discourse is delivered by a clergyman designated for that purpose by the governor. From the church they return in the same order to the state-house; and, finally, the privileged ones partake of a splendid dinner, at the expense of the state. The number of *clergymen* who usually attended on this occasion was from one hundred and fifty to two hundred! "This *Election-day*," says our polite and attentive correspondent, "was, and now is, observed as the greatest holyday in the year. But since the *Constitution* was formed, there have been changes at various times; and at present no part of the expense of this parade is paid from the state treasury; and it is now understood that the legislature *can* commence their session without a sermon to direct their counsels."

The Fourth of July, the anniversary of American Inde-

* Such was the custom twenty years ago. It may have changed since that period.

pendence, is celebrated in all the cities and populous towns of New-England, by military parades, firing of cannon, display of colours, ringing of bells, patriotic orations, public dinners, &c.

Landing of the Pilgrims.—The anniversary of this event is celebrated at Plymouth, on the 22d of December, by an appropriate oration, and a *dinner of clams*, that being the food which, it is said, sustained the families of the pious emigrants during the severe winter of 1620–21. The whole number which landed was one hundred and one; one half of whom, before the opening of spring, were cut off by famine and disease. In celebrating this event, however, their grateful and fortunate descendants do not *confine* themselves to that humble dish alone; for though *clams*, dressed in various ways, form a conspicuous feature of the banquet, they are generally accompanied with some luxuries to which the fugitives from persecution were total strangers.

Battle of Bunker Hill.—On the 17th of June, the citizens of Boston and Charlestown unite in celebrating the anniversary of this important event. A splendid civic procession, under a military escort, proceeds to the battle-ground, where a patriotic oration is delivered, and other appropriate exercises are performed; to which succeed such festivities as are customary on like occasions, viz. dinners, toasts, odes, music, &c.

Commencement at Cambridge.—The annual Commencement at Harvard University takes place in August. The inhabitants of Cambridge honour this anniversary with a festival of three days' duration, which is attended by numerous visiters from Boston, Charlestown, and the neighbouring towns. It may be proper to observe here, that on this and each of the foregoing occasions, a general *holyday* is enjoyed by mechanics, apprentices, servants, labourers, teachers, pupils, and all subordinates whose services can be dispensed with by their employers. The hearts of such anticipate these festivals with hope and joy, and remember them when past with delight and approbation.

Husking Frolics.—The well-known adage, "Many hands make light work," is frequently illustrated by the New-England farmers, in uniting together to assist a neighbour in any temporary emergency that requires expedition and despatch. The person thus benefited provides ample

stores of refreshments, to regale his obliging neighbours, on the conclusion of their voluntary tasks; and then holds himself in readiness, on a similar occasion, to "go and do likewise." This mode of "exchanging works," as they call it, is found very beneficial; as much more can be accomplished, in a given time, by a *union* than by a *division* of physical powers. A conviction of this fact was doubtless the origin of "*husking parties*," a brief description of which will not be deemed inappropriate in this place.

When the Indian corn, or *maize*, has been gathered from the fields and deposited in the corn-house, or the centre-floor of the barn, where it is ranged in convenient heaps and rows, an evening is appointed for the *husking*; which is simply stripping the leaves or husks from the full-ripened ears, and is performed by hand. Those who are invited assemble at an early hour, take their seats in rows or circles, at convenient distances, and attack the ponderous heaps before them. The ears are stripped with a dexterous hand, and thrown into a general heap, while the husks are cast behind the operators. In the mean time the song, and jest, and laugh go round, while the sparkling cider is freely circulated, as "the work goes bravely on." When all is finished, the company repair to the house of their hospitable host, and partake of a bounteous banquet prepared for the occasion. This is not unfrequently followed by a ball; as most of the young men are accompanied by their favourite lasses.

A New-England *husking*, however, has been so well described by Barlow, in his inimitable poem in praise of "*hasty-pudding*," that it would be unpardonable not to give an extract before we conclude. The third canto thus commences:—

"The days grow short; but though the falling sun
To the glad swain proclaims his day's work done,
Night's pleasing shades his various task prolong,
And yield new subject to my various song.
For now, the *corn-house* filled, the *harvest-home*,
The invited neighbours to the *husking* come;
A frolic scene, where work, and mirth, and play
Unite their charms to chase the hours away.

Where the huge heap lies centred in the hall,
The lamp suspended from the cheerful wall,
Brown *corn-fed* nymphs, and strong hard-handed beaus,
Alternate ranged, extend in circling rows,

Assume their seats, the solid mass attack,
*The dry husks rustle, and the corn-cobs crack,**
The song, the laugh, alternate notes resound,
And the sweet cider trips in silence round.

The laws of *husking* every wight can tell,
And sure no laws he ever keeps so well:—
For each *red ear*, a general kiss he gains,
With each *smut-ear* he soils the luckless swains;
But when to some sweet *maid* the prize is cast,
Red as her lips, and taper as her waist,
She walks the rounds, and culls one favoured beau,
Who leaps the luscious tribute to bestow.

Various the sport, as are the wit and brains
Of well-pleased lasses, and contending swains;
Till the vast mound of corn is swept away,
And he that gets the *last ear* wins the day.

Meanwhile, the housewife plies her evening care
The well-earned feast to hasten and prepare;
* * * * * *
When to the board the thronging huskers pour,
And take their seats, as at the corn before."

The games and amusements of New-England are similar to those of other sections of the United States. The young men are expert in a variety of games at ball,—such as cricket, base, cat, football, trapball, also quoits, &c. Billiards, cards, ninepins, shovelboard, domino, backgammon, bagatelle, checkers or drafts, and some other games, not recollected, are occasionally practised by all classes; but generally with temperance and moderation. Gambling is a vice but little known in the Eastern States, especially in those places where the drama and other rational amusements are tolerated by law. Concerts, balls, and several well-selected museums are favourite resorts of the fair sex, in cities and populous towns; while the village and country lasses enjoy their *spinning* and *quilting* bevies, singing-schools, and *pawn* parties, with at least an equal zest. In winter, sleighing, skating, and "coursing down-hill" are amusements familiar to both sexes, and all ages. Bear-baiting, cock-fighting, and other cruel amusements are unknown.

* There are few lines in English poetry in which the *sound* is a more perfect echo to the *sense* than it is in this.

CHAPTER III.

Festivals, Games, and Amusements in the Middle States.

"This life were but a dreary scene,
Without such little spots of green;
But every joy, like this we taste,
Imparts new strength to tread the waste.
Such pleasures leave no sting behind,
But sweetly elevate the mind,
Till every heart, with generous glow,
Is blest to see its neighbour so."
Pastoral Melodies.

Although more than one hundred and sixty years have elapsed since the Dutch colony of New-Netherlands submitted to the British crown, and became an English province; yet we find that many of the customs and peculiar observances of the original settlers are still prevalent in the city and state of New-York. The festivities of a Dutch Christmas, New-Year's, and Paas, were readily copied by their new neighbours, until the jolly Saint Nicholas, in a dark night, was unable to distinguish his own legitimate urchins from those of pure English blood. He therefore good-naturedly distributed his favours to all, with no other distinction than what arose from superior merit. Hence, notwithstanding that the present population of New-York comprises representatives of almost "every nation, kindred, tongue, and people" under the face of heaven, there is little, if any, dissimilarity in their holyday amusements. The features of the picture are Dutch,—though the shades and colouring may be of a variety of schools.

To commence our subject with the opening of the year, —the *first day of January* has always been observed as a festival of no little importance by the citizens of the Middle States; not only as one of the Christmas holydays, but also as a landmark or milestone in the rugged journey of human life; or rather as an inn or stopping-place for refreshments, at which the way-worn traveller pauses with delight, and then presses forward with renovated hope and vigour.

"It is at once so natural and so laudable," says our author. "to commemorate the nativity of the *New-year*, which is a sort of second birth-day of our own, by acts of grateful worship to Heaven, and of beneficence towards our fellow-creatures, that this mode of its celebration will be found to have prevailed, with little variety of observance, among all ages and people."

New-year's Day has often been the theme of poets and novelists, and, perhaps, we cannot make a more appropriate quotation, in illustration of the subject, than the following from the novel of Koningsmarke, by our countryman J. K. Paulding, a writer, of no less celebrity than the one whom he here compliments:—

"*Winter*, with silver locks and sparkling icicles, now gradually approached under cover of his north-west winds, his pelting storms, cold frosty mornings, and bitter freezing nights. And here we will take occasion to express our obligations to the popular author of the Pioneers* for the pleasure we have derived from his happy delineations of the progress of our seasons, and the successive changes which mark their course. All that remember their youthful days in the country, and look back with tender, melancholy enjoyment upon their slippery gambols on the ice, their *Christmas* pies and nut-crackings by the cheerful fireside, will read *his* pages with a gratified spirit, and thank him heartily for having refreshed their memory with the half-effaced recollections of scenes and manners, labours and delights, which, in the progress of time and the changes which every where mark his course, will, in some future age, perhaps, live only in the touches of *his* pen.

"The *holydays*, those wintry blessings which cheer the heart of young and old, and give to the gloomy depths of winter the life and spirit of laughing, jolly spring, were now near at hand. [A. D. 1685.] The chopping-knife gave token of goodly *mincepies*, and the bustle of the kitchen afforded shrewd indications of what was coming by-and-by. The celebration of the *New-year*, it is well known, came originally from the northern nations of Europe, who still keep up many of the practices, amusements, and enjoyments known to their ancestors. The governor valued

* Cooper.

himself upon being a genuine northern man, and consequently held the *winter holydays* in special favour and affection. In addition to this hereditary attachment to ancient customs, it was shrewdly suspected that his zeal in celebrating these *good old sports* was not a little quickened in consequence of William Penn having hinted, in the course of their controversy, that the practice of keeping *holydays* savoured, not only of popery, but paganism.

"Scarce was the sun above the horizon, when the village was alive with rosy boys and girls, dressed in their new suits, and going forth with such warm anticipations of happiness, as time and experience imperceptibly fritter away into languid hopes or strengthening apprehensions.

"'*Happy New-year!*' came from every mouth and every heart. Spiced beverages and lusty cakes were given away with liberal open hand; everybody was welcomed to every house; all seemed to forget their little heartburnings and disputes of yore—all seemed happy, and all *were* so; and the dominie, who always wore his coat with four great pockets, on New-year's day came home and emptied them seven times of loads of New-year cakes!

"When the gay groups had finished their rounds in the village, the ice in front [on the river] was seen all alive with the small-fry of Elsingburgh, gambolling and skating, sliding and tumbling, helter-skelter, and making the frost-bit ears of winter glad with the sounds of mirth and revelry. In one place was a group playing at *hurley*, with crooked sticks, with which they sometimes hit the ball, and sometimes each other's shins. In another, a knot of *sliders*, following in a row, so that if the foremost fell, the rest were sure to tumble over him. A little farther might be seen a few, that had the good fortune to possess a pair of skates, luxuriating in that most graceful of all exercises, and emulated by some half a dozen little urchins, with smooth bones fastened to their feet, in imitation of the others, skating away with a gravity and perseverance worthy of better implements. All was fun, laughter, revelry, and happiness; and that day, the icy mirror of the noble Delaware reflected as light hearts as ever beat together in the new world."

Such are supposed to have been the juvenile sports of *New-year's day*, in the Middle States, one hundred and fifty

years ago; and such, with little variation, are they at the present period. In the city of New-York, in particular, the good old custom of paying passing visits, and reviving friendships on New-year's day, is still kept up. "It is a practice," says the writer just quoted, "hallowed by time and sanctioned by its salutary consequences. It brings long estranged friends to remember and visit each other; it gives life and gayety to a dreary, inclement season; it is, in short, a social, honest, old-fashioned custom, and as such I honour it." Public business of every kind is suspended; the courts, banks, custom-house, post-office, all are closed; and few shopkeepers have the hardihood to open their bow-windows on New-year's day. Debtors are safe from arrest, can boldly meet their creditors, and wish them a happy New-year. Even that mighty, restless engine, the daily press, stands still to-day; and hungry *quidnuncs* must fast for news, or receive it verbally from the prattling tongues of the fair distributors of cakes and coffee, with whom they exchange the compliments of the season. But though the news-press be silent, some of its subordinate agents are this day in all their glory. The CARRIER, who has faithfully served his patrons, "through summer's heat and winter's cold," now reaps his well-earned reward in a harvest of silver. Each of his subscribers is presented with a printed poetical address, previously prepared for the occasion by some laureat bard, who is thus himself enabled to join in the festivities of the day. No matter what may be the literary merits or demerits of this annual effusion, it is always well received and well paid for. No one criticises or complains, for all are determined to be happy, and where numbers unite in such a laudable determination, it is not a trifle that can defeat their object. How cold, unfeeling, and bigoted must be that heart that would throw a straw in the way of such innocent enjoyments! and yet, *some such there are!* The day is short; but a long evening of festivity is to follow. The theatres and the museums are all open; while a grand *ball*, "got up expressly for the occasion," exhibits its fascinations to the lovers of dancing.

VALENTINE'S DAY.—The old English custom of sending *valentines*, and drawing lots for husbands and spouses, on the 14th of February, was never much practised by the people of the United States, and is now almost unknown. In a

former part of this volume, page 116, are some remarks on the subject, to which we would subjoin the following: In the old illustrations of the Common Prayer-book, we are told that St. Valentine "was a man of most admirable parts, and so famous for his *love* and charity, that the custom of choosing valentines upon his festival took its rise from thence." Mr. Brande, in his Illustrations of the *Antiquitates Vulgares*, maintains that there is no authority for supposing St. Valentine was more famous for love and charity than other saints. The probability is, that the custom of sending valentines and using divinations on this day originated in the popular opinion that the birds choose their mates about this time. In *Italy*, where the custom originated, this may be the case; but in the United States, these connubial contracts among the feathered choir occur at a much later period, say April.

Washington's Birth-day.—The 22d of February is kept as a holyday in some parts of the United States, in honour of the birth of Washington. It was formerly celebrated in the city of New-York with a splendid civic and military procession, oration, dinner, &c. The custom, however, we are sorry to add, has gradually declined, and is at length entirely laid aside.

St. Patrick's Day.—The 17th of March is annually celebrated by the patriotic sons of Erin, in New-York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, in honour of their tutelar saint. Many native Americans of the first respectability unite with their adopted fellow-citizens on this occasion.

Easter Day.—This is a festival instituted to commemorate the resurrection of our Saviour; and is the first *feast* day after the long abstinence of *Lent*. It occurs on the first Sunday after the full moon which happens upon, or next after, the 21st day of March; and if the full moon happen upon a Sunday, Easter-day is the Sunday following. For a more particular description, the reader is referred to the conclusion of the tenth chapter of the foregoing work.

Paas, or Pasche.—The first of these words (pronounced as if written *pauce*, rhyming with *sauce*), is the Dutch term for *Easter-day*. It answers to the *pasche*, or passover of the Hebrews, and most nations still give it this name, *pasche*, *pask*, *paque*. But our ancestors seem to have preferred a pagan origin for the name of a Christian festival, for the

word *Easter* is supposed to be from *Eoster*, the goddess of love, or the Venus of the North, in honour of whom a festival was celebrated by the Saxons, in April; whence this month was called *Eostermonath*. By the term *paas*, however, our merry schoolboys in the Middle States (who cannot be supposed to be very deeply versed in theological etymology), understand neither more nor less than *Easter-Monday*, which they define thus: "*the day for cracking eggs.*"

The custom of *dying* or *staining eggs*, on Easter-day, and presenting them to children, is very ancient, and is supposed to have had an allusion to the resurrection of our Saviour; which might have been typified by the process of hatching a *living* animal from a mass of apparently *inert* matter, so much like animating the dead.* The custom is common among the modern Greeks, the Russians, and, indeed, in all countries where the Catholic religion prevails, whether under the Greek or Latin dispensations. The rich in Russia were accustomed to exchange *gilt* eggs, on Easter-day, accompanied by kisses and embraces; "after which," says the Abbe d'Auteroche, "they drink a great deal of brandy!" In New-York, eggs, died or stained with a variety of colours, are displayed for sale on Easter-Monday, by grocers, hucksters, fruiterers, and other venders of edible refreshments. These are called *paas-eggs*, or *pasch-eggs*.

We cannot find that the custom of *cracking eggs* on Easter-Monday, as practised in New-York and some other parts of the United States, by the descendants of the Dutch settlers, is known among other nations. Neither Mr. Bourne nor Mr. Brande mentions it in their respective accounts of the "*Antiquitates Vulgares*;" and Dr. Chandler, as well as Hackluyt, omit it in their notice of the practice of dying and exchanging eggs at Easter, by the modern Greeks and Russians. Its origin is unknown to us, and it is believed to be *peculiar* to the United States. The game (if it be one) is played in the following manner:—

Both parties, we will suppose, are prepared for the contest, being already "supplied with the munitions of war;" say, a dozen eggs each, carefully selected and scientifically tested, by striking the *butts* and *points* (the big and little

* A different explanation is given in a former part of this volume, at page 194.

ends, against the front teeth, in order to be certain that the shells are hard, strong, thick, stout, and if possible, "*uncrackable.*" The challenger then encloses an egg in one of his hands, so that no part of it is visible except the *point* (or *butt*, as the conditions may be), which does not protrude above the horizontal level of the circling thumb and fingers, but remains some distance below it, generally supported beneath by the palm of the other hand. Holding it in this manner, he challenges his antagonist to hit it with the *point* or *butt* of another egg. The shell of one of them must, of course, yield to the force of the concussion, and the *cracked egg* becomes the prize of the victor. In this manner, hundreds of eggs are lost and won in a short time; and as the slight injury which they receive does not lessen their intrinsic value, the winnings are of some account to the victors.

The contest, as we have surveyed it thus far, is all fair. But, "poor human nature!" we are sometimes almost tempted to believe that the devil challenged Eve to *gamble* for the apple, there is such an inherent propensity in man (even in the comparative innocent state of childhood) to take advantage of his fellows. *Artificial eggs*, curiously made of wood, marble, and other hard substances, are frequently used with such address as completely to deceive the eye, and thus the unsuspecting party falls an easy prey to the artifice of his antagonist, and finds himself suddenly stripped of his capital, and put *hors du combat*, without being able to account for the misfortune. But wo betide the juvenile sharper should the trick be detected! The scene exhibited on a certain race-course, between a certain *prince* and another jockey, would here be repeated on a smaller scale. Ten to one but an attempt would be made to *crack* something harder than eggs.

This custom probably owes its origin to the same propensity which impels boys to trials of skill and strength, to feats of activity, and to rivalries of all sorts in their sports and occupations.

St. George's Day.—The 23d of April is celebrated by several associations of loyal Englishmen, in the United States, in honour of their patron and champion, St. George. It is not included, however, among our author's "holyday notices" of England, though he has mentioned almost every

other saint in the calendar. St. George, it is well known, was one of those redoubtable knights-errant celebrated in the romance of the "Seven Champions of Christendom." His famous victory over the dragon is faithfully represented on one side of the beautiful gold coin called an English sovereign. Those who would "further seek his merits to disclose" are referred to the wild romances of the middle ages, particularly to the one just named; the *witcheries* of which had no inconsiderable influence in turning the brain of the celebrated knight of La Mancha.

MAY-DAY IN NEW-YORK.—We are almost tempted, like the author of the foregoing work, to give *May-day* a chapter by itself; for it is an annual celebration, in the city of New-York, that may challenge all the world for a parallel. A faithful description of it in prose were impossible, and it has frequently been attempted in poetry without success. The dramatist has exerted his skill in vain, and the painter has wasted his colours to the same purpose.

"Naught but itself can e'er itself portray."

May-day in New-York must be seen, and heard, and felt, and tasted, in order to be known and appreciated. The most expressive and appropriate language that could be addressed to a stranger on this subject must be quoted from the awful tragedy of Tom Thumb. The stranger would naturally exclaim,

"Sure such a day as this was never seen."

To which the citizen would respond, in the language of Noodle,

"This day, oh! Mr. Doodle, is a day
Indeed! a day *you* never saw before."

The present volume, according to the titlepage, is devoted to "festivals, games, and amusements;" but whether the anniversary under consideration be one, or all, or none of these, requires some little philosophy to decide. It cannot be a *festival*; for eating on the first of May is entirely out of the question.

——"Sleepless was the night,
And foodless is the day, for all must fast."

It is not an *amusement*, except to those landlords who are lucky enough to receive their rents on this day (for, we ought to have sooner said, it is *quarter-day*). It must, therefore, be a *game* in which those who make the greatest *moves* are often the greatest *losers*; the *winners* being those who do not *move* at all; as the only gambler who is really and permanently successful is the keeper of the table. It is called a *game* in the poem from which the following lines are extracted:

> "There is a sport well-known in country towns,
> Y'clept the *toilet*, which I've often joined
> At milkmaids' parties, where the humour lies
> In having chairs enough for all but *one*,
> Who takes the middle of the happy ring,
> Unseated; till, the signal given, all
> Must change their places; who obtains no seat,
> Incurs a forfeit, and the centre takes,
> To give the signal for another change.
> Such is the *game* our city represents
> The first of May; for each must change his place,
> Uncertain if he get a seat or no."

This is no poetical fiction; as a very few years have elapsed since so many luckless tenants remained without tenements to shelter their families, that the common council debated on the propriety of erecting barracks in the Park for their accommodation!

To be more explicit,—which may be necessary should these pages chance to fall into the hands of a foreigner,—all rents, leases, tenures, &c. in the city of New-York, commence and expire on the first day of May; so that about one-third of a population of two hundred thousand souls change their residence annually on that day! It will be readily conceived that this general movement must create a great bustle and disturbance; and as all the rents are *paid* at that period, what an immense sum must be drawn at once from the regular routine of trade! This one circumstance is the sole reason of there being in New-York a much greater number of distressed tenants, in proportion to the population, than in any other city of the Union. They cannot procure a small temporary loan, for the plain and simple reason, that the friends who readily accommodate them on other occasions find it sufficiently difficult to pay their own rents on this. It is certainly a bad system; but it is, perhaps, impossible to devise an adequate remedy.

SPRING RACES.—Horse-racing, under some wholesome restrictions, is tolerated by law, in the State of New-York. About the middle of May and October, the Union Course, on Long Island, exhibits an animated scene for three days, attended by immense crowds of spectators from the city and neighbouring villages.

INDEPENDENCE.—The fourth of July, which (as we have before observed) is celebrated in all parts of the United States, is distinguished by much splendour and festivity in the city of New-York. A particular description, however, is unnecessary for this work, as the subject must be familiar to every reader who is in the habit of perusing the daily papers.

EVACUATION.—The 25th of November is observed by the citizens of New-York, in remembrance of the evacuation of the city by the British troops in 1783. For many years after this event its anniversary was celebrated with an enthusiasm and splendour little inferior to that exhibited on the fourth of July; but the patriotic spirit in which its observance originated has gradually evaporated; until, at length, the return of this anniversary is met with comparative indifference. It is now distinguished by nothing but a *morning salute*, by a few gray-headed heroes of the revolution, "the hardy gleanings of many a desperate fight," called the *veteran corps*; and a military parade in the forenoon. This growing indifference to our patriotic festivals is, doubtless, encouraged by many well-meaning, but mistaken people; who, in concert with a similar class in England, seem anxious to "restrict, as much as possible, the few diversions, and the scanty hours of relaxation allowed to the labouring classes," in both countries.

ST. ANDREW'S DAY.—The 30th of November is celebrated by the Scots in the United States, in honour of Scotia's patron saint, who is supposed to have preached the gospel in Scythia, and that he was there put to death on a cross of the figure of the letter X, which is called St. Andrew's cross.

CHRISTMAS.—So much has been already written, "said, and sung," on this animating subject, that little remains for the exercise of our pen, except references to the essays of others; and by turning to page 135 of this volume the reader will find some interesting facts with which every one ought to be acquainted.

Christmas, as the closing festival of the year, eclipses all its predecessors in splendour and hilarity; and *Christmas-eve*, in the city of New-York, exhibits a spectacle, which, to a stranger, must be highly pleasing and effective. Whole rows of confectionary stores and toy shops, fancifully, and often splendidly, decorated with festoons of bright silk drapery, interspersed with flowers and evergreens, are brilliantly illuminated with gas-lights, arranged in every shape and figure that fancy can devise. During the evening, until midnight, these places are crowded with visiters of both sexes and all ages; some selecting toys and fruits for holyday presents; others merely lounging from shop to shop to enjoy the varied scene. But the most interesting, and, in our estimation, the most delightful sight of all, is the happy and animated countenances of children on this occasion. Their joy cannot be restrained, but bursts out in boisterous mirth, or beams from the countenance in sunny smiles, which are still more expressive. If the weather be fair, music is heard from various quarters, while charging peals from the chiming bells of old Trinity fall at intervals on the delighted ear.

"Hark, the merry bells chiming from Trinity,
Charm the ear with their musical din,
Telling all throughout the vicinity,
Holyday gambols are now to begin.
Friends and relations, with ford salutations,
And warm gratulations, together appear,
While lovers and misses with holyday kisses,
Greet merry Christmas and happy New-Year."

An editorial article in the "New-York Mirror" contains the following sentiments on this subject:

"The throngs of happy children that we encounter in the streets, whose little smiling faces look almost blue with the cold, but whom wind and weather cannot restrain from sallying out to spend their holyday finances in the nearest toyshop; the greeting of 'a happy Christmas to you,' that salutes our ears into whatever house we step, and for saying which the urchins expect a return, but not in kind; and the peculiar nature of the amusements and sports *around the evening fireside*, where a sort of moral sunshine diffuses itself, bright in proportion to the bleak and disagreeable state of external nature; all are but so many

evidences of the undecaying spirit with which this festive period of the year is still observed. It is, to young and old, to the reflecting and the thoughtless, to all who depend for their felicity on the only true source of temporal happiness, social intercourse,—it is, to such, a season of real pleasure. The lively tale around the blazing hearth; the sprightly jest, not meant to conceal some bitter taunt, but flowing from the heart's fulness; the song, the dance, the jocund laugh, are but so many modes of evincing that 'all is sunshine in each jovial breast.'

"In country places, where homeborn joys must necessarily be most resorted to, the holyday season affords, perhaps, the highest degree of satisfaction. The gigantic yule log,* a long time previously selected for the purpose, is rolled upon the hearth; and around the crackling flame soon kindled before it is placed (to take away part of their winter temperature,) a plentiful abundance of nuts, and cakes, and sparkling cider to regale the mirthful circle. Then,

> "'—— in the sounding hall they wake
> The rural gambol. Rustic sports go round;
> The simple joke that takes the shepherd's heart,
> Easily pleased; the long, loud laugh sincere;
> The kiss, snatched hasty from the sidelong maid,
> On purpose guardless, or pretending sleep;
> The leap, the slap, the haul; and, shook to notes
> Of native music, the respondent dance.
> Thus jocund fleets with them the Christmas night.'

"The remark we have made, that a greater degree of happiness during the period every where devoted to festivity, is experienced in the country than in the city, where so many showy sources of amusement are congregated, might lead a meditative mind to some very useful reflections.—The number and nature of the lures held out in thickly populated places to draw us from our firesides cannot but be considered as one great cause of infelicity. Cowper well calls

> 'Domestic happiness the only bliss
> Of Paradise that has survived the fall,'

* See page 135 of this volume.

and that bliss is to be tasted only in calmness and seclusion. Not to the crowded theatre, where the heart and mind are wrought up to unnatural and unsalutary excitement, and where pleasure roams 'with zoneless waist, and wandering eyes;' not to the public haunt, where politicians vex the air with varying themes and mixed discourse; not in the mazy dance, in fashion's lighted dome,

> 'Where a gay insect in *his* summer shine,
> The fop, light fluttering, spreads his mealy wings;'

but in the thought-befriending stillness of our homes we experience the sweetest and the purest joys that man can ever know. We are no enemy, as we have often shown, to a judicious use of public amusements; but it is the abuse of them that we censure. We are fully of the opinion, expressed by the Earl of Orrery, that 'a single day passed under our own roof, with our friends and family, is worth a thousand elsewhere.'

> "'In all my wanderings through this vale of tears,
> From infancy to manhood's riper years;
> Whatever pains assailed, or griefs oppressed,
> *Christmas* and *New-year* always saw me blest.
> A lengthened absence o'er, how pleasant then,
> To meet the friends dearest loved again.
> Grasp the warm hand, or share the fond embrace,
> And see new smiles lit up in every face.
> 'Twas Christmas-eve! the supper-board was spread,
> The fire blazed high, with logs of hickory fed;
> The candles, too, unusual lustre lent,
> Candles expressly made for this event.
> Old tales were told, the cheerful glass went round,
> While peals of laughter made the cot resound.
> A thousand welcomes hailed the truant boy,
> And swift the moments flew on wings of joy;
> Till (as they thought, too soon) the hour of prayer
> Bade the young urchins to their beds repair.
> But first, the stocking from each little leg,
> Must be suspended to a hook or peg,
> That *Santaclaus*, who travels all the night,
> Might, in the dark, bestow his favours right.
> These rites observed, they take a parting kiss,
> And go to dream of morning's promised bliss!
> Thus did a week of festive pleasures roll,
> Till New-year's happy morning crown'd the whole.'"

Turtle Feasts.—These are rural banquets at which turtle-soup is the leading and principal dainty. Turtle Grove, at Hoboken, has long been the resort of the New-

York epicures on these occasions, where they partake of a luxurious feast, in the open air, under the shade of embowering trees. This delightful retreat has recently been much improved by the tasteful proprietor, Colonel Stevens, and is now called the Elysian Fields, admirably fitted for a *fête champetre*.

KROUT FEASTS.—There is, in the city of New-York, a regularly organized association of respectable and temperate *bon vivans*, entitled the "Krout Club," the members of which are mostly, if not all, of Dutch origin or extraction, —lineal descendants of the old Knickerbocker stock. Once a year, or as much oftener as they please, they "hold a solemn feast" in honour of the customs of their forefathers. On such occasions the festive board is loaded with every dainty the season affords; but the most prominent and characteristic viands are *sour-crout*,* smoked sausages cut into ringlets, and smoked goose. The presiding officer at these banquets, who is honoured with the title of *king*, is generally arrayed in a regal robe of *purple* cabbage-leaves, while his royal brows are circled with a diadem of the same material. By virtue of his office and prerogative, his majesty is exempt from every duty, even that of *thinking*—the least degree of activity, except that of mastication, being considered incompatible with the dignity of his kingly station. His reign, however, is generally short, as he who devours the most *krout* at a single sitting always succeeds him in office, and presides at the next festival; at the conclusion of which, he, in turn, is succeeded by some greater gourmand than himself.

TARGET FIRING.—This is a trial of skill between military competitors, where an honorary prize is awarded to the best marksman. It is an ancient usage, having been practised in every age, and by the youth of every nation that had the least pretensions to martial attainments. It was thus the ancients acquired their superior skill in the use of the bow and the javelin; and it is by a similar competition that the modern Indian youths become so expert in throwing the hatchet. The invention of gunpowder has furnished

* *Sour-crout* is made by placing minced or chopped cabbage in layers, in a barrel, with a handful of salt and caraway-seed between the layers; then ramming down the whole, covering it, pressing it with a heavy weight, and suffering it to stand till it has gone through fermentation.

new excitements to the competitor, and rendered the exercise more interesting to the spectator.

It is customary for the uniformed *companies* of cavalry, artillery, infantry, and riflemen attached to the various divisions, brigades, and regiments of militia throughout the United States, to assemble once a year for *practice* and *improvement* at *target-firing*. This is always a voluntary parade, and takes place during the spring and summer months. All expenses are paid by the subscriptions of the officers and privates. These excursions are conducted in the following manner:—At early dawn, the members "fully uniformed, armed, and equipped, as the law directs," meet at the place of rendezvous with colours, drums, and "other martial appurtenances to boot;" and being formed into a company or battalion, as the case may be, under the command of the oldest subaltern, break into column, and march to a steamboat, which conveys them some short distance into the country, where, on a suitable lawn, previously selected for the purpose by the "committee of arrangements," a target is erected, the ground measured, and all things got in readiness.

Judges are appointed, consisting usually of the field officers of the regiment or brigade to which the party is attached, who are invited *guests*. The privates are then counted off from the right, and present themselves as their numbers are called by the captain. Three rounds are discharged. The soldier who has the *two best shots* out of the *three nearest the centre of the target* is pronounced the *victor*, and the PRIZE is adjudged accordingly. This is either a musket, a sword, a pair of pistols, or a gold medal, which is delivered, with an appropriate address, by the senior officer, in front of the company, who *present arms* during this part of the ceremony. After this the exercises and evolutions are performed. The whole party then repair to the dinner-table, where a sumptuous repast is spread out under the shade of trees, ornamented with flags and other military trophies. When the festivities of the day are concluded, the *corps* in "good health and spirits" march again to the steamboat, which is in waiting to convey them to the city, where they arrive about dusk, disembark with the usual clamour and "circumstance of glorious war," march to the place appointed, and are there dismissed.

These *target-firing* excursions are very pleasant affairs to all who partake of them, and tend to create and preserve good feeling and harmony among the officers and men. But we cannot commend the innovation which has recently been introduced, of publishing the proceedings in next day's newspapers, together with the toasts, speeches, &c. The military are thus not unfrequently made a party in politics; their entertainment assumes all the importance of a public dinner; and a *public dinner* on small occasions is, to use the language of Mrs. Malaprop, "most tolerable, and not to be endured." We feel confident the custom, originated in bad taste, can answer no good purpose, and ought to be discontinued.

Aquatic Excursions are pleasant and healthful recreations; for the enjoyment of which abundant facilities are furnished by nature in almost every part of the United States. Independent of an extensive seaboard, indented with innumerable bays, harbours, and other inlets, the interior of the country is every where veined with beautiful rivers, and gemmed with pellucid lakes. In this respect the State of New-York surpasses all her sisters; while her metropolis enjoys aquatic advantages, both for business and pleasure, which, perhaps, are not equalled in any part of the world. Steamboats fitted up in the most elegant manner, expressly for the accommodation of *pleasure-parties*, are daily, almost hourly, departing and returning, filled with hundreds of happy mortals. Whatever direction these may take in leaving the city, the delighted inmates are certain to be regaled with scenery of enchanting loveliness.

Let the spectator take his stand on a well-known promenade, in the city of New-York, called the Battery, an obtuse point of land, formed by the junction of two majestic rivers. The bay and harbour are extended before him, studded with little green islands, and sprinkled with vessels of every size. To the left is the verdant shore of Long Island; to the right he may look up the noble Hudson, where Hoboken, Weehawk, and beyond them the gray majestic precipices present themselves in succession. In front are the low but picturesque shores of Jersey, spotted with little thriving villages, and bounded in the distance by waving blue hills; and down the river,

he heights of Staten Island, on one side, finely contrast with the low shores of the opposite isle. Whichever way he directs his view, his eye will rest upon some of those floating palaces, displaying their pennons of smoke far behind them, and containing in their splendid saloons, or on their elevated promenades, happy groups of the beautiful and the gay, enjoying the breezy pleasures of an *aquatic excursion*.

Public Shows, &c.—All our cities are amply supplied with public shows, and places of amusement. Theatres, concerts, pleasure-gardens, equestrian exhibitions, museums, zoological gardens, menageries of wild beasts, jugglers, &c. &c., all meet with sufficient encouragement; while reading-rooms, academies of the fine arts, and other fashionable resorts hold forth their attractions to professional artists, amateurs, literary loungers, and bookless authors.

Gymnasiums, or institutions for teaching and practising *athletic exercises*, have been established in Philadelphia, New-York, and some other cities. That of Mr. Fuller, in New-York, is the only one we have examined, and we do not hesitate to pronounce it wortly the highest approbation. It ought to be visited by every person interested in the health and morals of youth. Mr. Fuller has published a pamphlet, entitled the "Elements of Gymnastics," containing an account of its origin, with answers to objections, its physical and moral effects, and full directions for practising the whole of the gymnastic exercises. This pamphlet ought to be in the hands of every parent, and we think few *fathers* would hesitate to adopt its principles. The terms of teaching are very moderate—the benefits incalculable.

CHAPTER IV.

Festivals, Games, and Amusements in the Southern States.

"O blessed be the torrid zone for ever, whose rapid vegetation quickens nature into such benignity."—CUMBERLAND.

"Warn them they judge not of superior beings,
Souls made of fire, and children of the sun."—ZANGA.

If there be any festivals, games, or amusements, *peculiar* to the Southern States, we shall probably find them to be as different from those of the Northern sections of the Union as are the feelings, opinions, and manners of the inhabitants. The *amusements* of a people, philosophers contend, always correspond with their *national* or *sectional* character; and the latter, we have reason to believe, is ever more or less influenced by climate, soil, and location, combined with other external circumstances and contingencies incidental thereto. Look at Europe, where the inhabitants, for instance, if not lineal descendants from the aborigines of that country, have at least been naturalized for many centuries, and contrast a northern with a southern nation, and we shall see as much difference in their characters and amusements, as in their respective climates. In the cold, cheerless, rugged regions of Norway, where incessant physical exertion is requisite to procure the mere necessaries of existence, we find an industrious, enterprising, hardy race, resembling in mind and feature the harshness and wildness of surrounding nature. But let us visit the sunny plains of Italy, where nature requires no soliciting for her sweetest favours, and we shall meet with a polished, tasteful, luxurious people, addicted to indolence, music, and love. The *amusements* of the former (when they are permitted to indulge in any) are rough, manly, and athletic; while those of the latter are soft, effeminate, and sensual.*

* It is well known to all who are conversant with history, that the *climate* of Italy is now very different from what it was eighteen hundred years ago; and so is the *character* of the people.

But we find that the same degrees of latitude do not produce the same climates, nor the same moral and physical effects, on the western side of the Atlantic as are exhibited on the other. Naples in Italy, and New-York in America, are on the same parallel of latitude, and so are Sicily and Virginia. But how different is the climate, and how dissimilar are the characters, manners, habits, customs, and amusements of the inhabitants, on the same parallel! The difference in character, however, may be partially accounted for by the fact, that the citizens of New-York and Virginia are descendants of European emigrants from much higher latitudes, if not more temperate climates than their own. Hence, instead of the soft effeminacy, sensuality, and indolence of the enslaved and debased Sicilian, the honourable and high-minded Virginian exhibits that chivalric, manly, reckless daring in his amusements which characterized the English cavaliers, whose blood he inherits; and which, so far from degenerating beneath the fervid influence of a southern clime, has thereby been quickened into richer and riper benignity.

These remarks may go for exactly what they are worth, which, we are well aware, is not much; but when one cannot find a motto suitable for his subject, it is certainly no bad policy to adapt his subject to the motto.

The hospitality of the planters south of the Potomac has become proverbial. Their doors are ever open to travellers, and their tables are never so luxuriantly spread as when strangers are to be their guests. In fact, we cool, calculating natives of the North can form no accurate idea of the character, manners, and customs of the South, until we visit that section of the Union. *Here*, a wealthy farmer will politely direct a respectable looking traveller to the nearest or best house of public entertainment; *there*, a planter would feel himself almost insulted if the traveller did not consent to become his own guest for a month, or as much longer as business or pleasure might induce him to tarry. "This spirit of hospitality," says a favourite author,* from whom we have often quoted, "confers lustre upon a country. It is one of the finest of *national* characteristics; and it is, in a great measure, owing to this, that little Ireland, with all

* See Paulding's "Letters from the South"

its bulls and oddities, is still a sort of pet nation to all the world, except its stern stepdame, Old England." And again, "All the nations of antiquity were *hospitable*, until they became *corrupt*. Among *them*, the stranger was a sacred character; and to do him violence, or to refuse him shelter, was an offence to the gods. The only life ever spared by the stern, unfeeling politician Ulysses was that of Heliacon, *because he remembered the hospitality of his father*."

A good book, which we wish was more fashionable, contains the following precept, not altogether irrelevant to the present subject: "Be not forgetful to entertain *strangers*; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."

In speaking of the hearty welcome with which he was received at the farm-houses of Virginia, the writer before quoted thus proceeds:—"At these 'gude houses' one is always sure of a welcome, unaffected and unostentatious; not the effect of a sudden fit of generosity, or given for the purpose of displaying to the eyes of a stranger the splendours of the house; but given without effort, *as if it were not worth giving*, and thus relieving the receiver from the weight of obligation. I have been at some of these places, and I hope in heaven I shall visit many more; for, of all the characters I covet for my country, that of *hospitality* is what I covet most." It should be recollected that this writer is a Northern man. "For my part," he adds, "not even the most substantial benefits warm my heart half so much as the recollection of those kind welcomes it has sometimes fallen to my lot to receive, when at a distance from home, and among strangers. This liberal hospitality, to whatever cause it may be owing, is more general in this part of the world [the South] than in the Middle and Eastern States.' It was, perhaps, this disposition "to entertain strangers" that first gave rise to the following peculiar custom.

Barbecues.—A favourite amusement (and generally, at the same time, an act of hospitality) in many parts of the Southern States, is what they term a *barbecue*. This is a feast in the open air, a *fête-champetre*, either under the shade of trees or in an artificial bower. This rural banquet (resembling in some respects the turtle-feasts at Hoboken) is prepared under the direction and at the expense of such neighbouring gentlemen as choose to unite for the purpose; each of whom usually contributes such edible dainties as

his taste or convenience may suggest. Independent of these *pic-nics*, however, there is always some savoury animal roasted whole, for this occasion, after the manner of the ancients. This is, most commonly, a fat corn-fed swine; and from hence originated the phrase of "going the whole hog." In different places, and under other circumstances, the victim may be a fine fat buck, a fallow deer, a sheep, or other animal. But, to constitute a *barbecue*, it must be roasted *whole*,—not a bone of it must be broken. These festivals take place during the summer and autumn months, when every luxury that the season can afford, accompanied with wine, punch, ices, and other suitable refreshments, is provided in generous abundance. Both sexes sometimes partake of this banquet, which is then enlivened by a band of music, and succeeded by a rural dance.

Horse-Racing.—The sports of the turf are enjoyed with much zest by the first classes in many parts of the South; and every where the accomplishment of horsemanship is highly appreciated. The Virginians, in particular, pride themselves on their equestrian feats. They say, that Washington, like Alexander, first tamed a wild *horse*, before he attempted to conquer *men*. But they forget to add, that, unlike Alexander, our hero next learned to tame his own wild passions before he undertook the taming of wild Indians, or the chastisement of wild Englishmen.

Cock-Fighting is also indulged in with avidity at the South; but it is a barbarous amusement, of which we cannot approve. This, with its kindred sports of bull and bear-baiting, ought to be discountenanced by every friend of humanity. The second motto to this chapter, however, forbids us to judge too harshly the friends of such amusements. Betting runs high in both these sports.

Deer-Hunting is called a manly sport; and so, indeed, it is, if we admit that the beasts of the forest were made for the use of man. For the *use* of man they were undoubtedly made; but whether for his *sport* is a different question, which ought to be answered by those, on the other side of the Atlantic, who keep deer and hares for the sole purpose of worrying them to death with hounds and horses.

Shooting, Fowling, Fishing, &c. are favourite amusements in those districts where nature has furnished the requisite facilities for their enjoyment.

Target-Shooting, and firing at a mark, are practised at the South in the same manner that they are in other parts of the country, except that they shoot with the rifle instead of a musket.

Bass-Hunting is a sport occasionally practised on the eastern shore of Maryland, it being performed on horseback! The equestrians, properly armed and equipped, ride into the shallow waters, where the striped-bass and rock-fish are found, and pursue their intended victims. When a fish is overtaken, he is speared or shot; which requires great dexterity on the part of the horseman. It will be recollected that these fish are frequently from two to three feet in length.

After all, however, we can recollect few amusements or sports that are *peculiar* to the South. As respects festivals and holydays, we believe, they are not numerous. The Catholics and Episcopalians, of course, observe such feast days as their respective churches require, particularly Christmas and New-year's. They sometimes keep "Twelfth-Night;" but with little, if any, difference from the old English ceremonies. The negroes, every winter, enjoy a week's recreation, including Christmas and New-year's; during which they prosecute their plays and sports in a very ludicrous and extravagant manner; dressing and masking in the most grotesque style, and having, in fact, a complete carnival. The anniversary of American independence occurs at a season when most of those who can afford to travel are inhaling the cooler breezes of the North; the day is still celebrated, however, in all their cities and populous towns, with parades, orations, public dinners, &c.

The *Western States*, being peopled principally by emigrants from the seaboard, present few novelties applicable to our present subject. Their customs and amusements, —at least, such of them as could properly claim a place in this Appendix, are similar to those which have already been described. But in Illinois, and in our newly-acquired territory of West Florida, there exists a peculiar custom, which deserves a particular description. This is the "shooting of the *pad-gaud*;" a diversion resembling that which forms so prominent an incident in Walter Scott's novel of "Old Mortality," namely, shooting the popinjay. The custom was, perhaps, brought from Normandy to

Canada, whence it travelled to Illinois, to Mobile, and to Pensacola. By the politeness of the editors of the New-York Mirror, we have been furnished with a description of one of those *fêtes*, from the pen of a gentleman who was present. It was given, on this occasion, by *three* kings, who had at different periods obtained this privilege by shooting down the *pad-gaud*, or artificial bird.* The scene of action was near Pensacola.

"The day fixed upon fortunately turned out to be unusually fine; a circumstance which does not always favour such rural festivals,—a general *ducking* sometimes terminating those delightful assemblages in the open air. Every sort of vehicle was put in requisition,—stages, carriages, gigs, and horse-carts; *cavaliers* on horseback, and some on foot; crowds of children, and a *dusky posse* of plebeians, might be seen in motion at an early hour. By ten o'clock the streets of Pensacola were entirely deserted,—there was scarcely a dog left to keep watch.

"The place chosen for the amusements of the day was at the distance of a mile and a half from the town, on the high land to the north, where there is a beautiful grove of spreading live-oaks. On reaching this spot, rendered more agreeable by contrast with the loose sandy road through which he had to wade, the writer found a numerous assemblage of people, dressed in their holyday apparel, together with all the fashion of the town. A long table was spread under the deep shade of the trees, and near each end of it stood a wide sideboard, fixed against their large trunks, and well supplied with refreshments. Beyond the grove there was a "bosky dell" filled with the rich, various, and fragrant shrubbery of this climate, and around there was the close green sod of the open fields, which had formerly been cultivated. Not far off stood the untenanted dwelling, at this moment, however, filled to overflowing with the gayest of the gay. The dance had already commenced, several sets of cotillions were footing it at once to the sound of the violin; and attracted by this animating scene, he left those who were seated or moving about singly, or in groups,

* *Gaud* is an obsolete French word, signifying a *male bird; gaud ind*, a male turkey; *pad*, or *pap*, from *papier*, a *paper bird*. The word *gaudy* is, perhaps, derived from the word *gaud;* the male bird is almost universally more ornamented by brilliant plumage than the female.

through the grove, to join the merry throng. The assemblage of beauty would have made a paradise of any place. Pleasure was painted on every countenance. The writer promised himself a delightful time, in which he was not disappointed.

"At twelve o'clock the important business of the day was announced—the shooting of the *pad-gaud*. Here it is proper to be a little more minute. The body of the bird was somewhat larger than that of a domestic fowl; it was made of the root of cypress or wild-olive, or other spongy material, so that it might be struck by a hundred balls without being brought down. An iron rod was passed through it, which was driven into the end of a long pole. The distance from the place where the shooters took their stand was about seventy yards. The head of the *gaudy* bird was crowned with a bunch of artificial flowers, while its spreading wings and the sweepy curve of its tail were adorned with a hundred ribands of every colour, and fluttering in the breeze—gifts which it had obtained from the ladies during the week, while paraded through the town. Every eye was now fixed on this object—it was sufficiently near to enable each fair maiden to distinguish her gift from the rest—and many a generous *cavaliero* guided by instinct, perhaps by some secret intimation, panted to possess himself, if not of the *whole bird*, at least of the *favour* of his damsel. Eighty tickets were drawn from a hat, and the lists forthwith opened. Rifles, muskets, fowling-pieces, double or single barrelled, with common or percussion locks, were brought forth. Officers of the army and navy, citizens, the young and old—all engaged in the contest with equal earnestness, and with equal gayety and good-humour; but the imagination must supply the rest.

"The shooting continued one hour and a half, until nothing remained of the poor bird but a small piece not longer than one's hand. As it diminished in size, and the aspirants grew more eager, the distance was shortened, until at last each one was at liberty to take what station he pleased. By this time the ornaments of the *pad-gaud* were transferred to the hats and button-holes of the more fortunate marksmen, who seldom obtained the riband most valued by them. A lucky, or perhaps well-directed shot brought down the remaining fragment—a shout ensued, and Mr. V. was pro-

claimed king. Then followed a procession—his majesty-elect with the bouquet in his hand, supported by the ex-kings, and preceded by music, playing "Hail to the chief." The procession passed twice in review before the ladies, who were seated, but on coming round the third time, a fair lady was chosen queen of the next festival, the bouquet was presented to her, the choice was ratified by general acclaim, and by the blushes of the maiden.

"The company soon after sat down to an elegant dinner; after which the dancing was resumed—the *fandango* following close on the heels of the Scotch reel. About sundown the returning population once more filled the streets, like the coming in of the tide. Any where else it might have been worth while to add, that in the whole of this numerous collection there was not to be seen a single instance of excess, nor was there the slightest occurrence to disturb the harmony and good-humour—but here, the circumstance produced no remark. This may be ascribed to the habitual temperance of the Spanish population, and still more to the formidable influence produced by the presence of the fair. It was indeed a pleasant day; and if there should be another *pad-gaud* while the writer remains here, he is determined to be one of the party, perhaps an aspirant for the honours of the day."

In conclusion, it may be proper to say, that some amusements, &c. have doubtless been forgotten in the hasty compilation of the foregoing pages; but such omissions may be supplied in future editions. In the mean time, any facts, hints, or information relating to the subject will be thankfully received by the publishers.

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